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MAGAZINE

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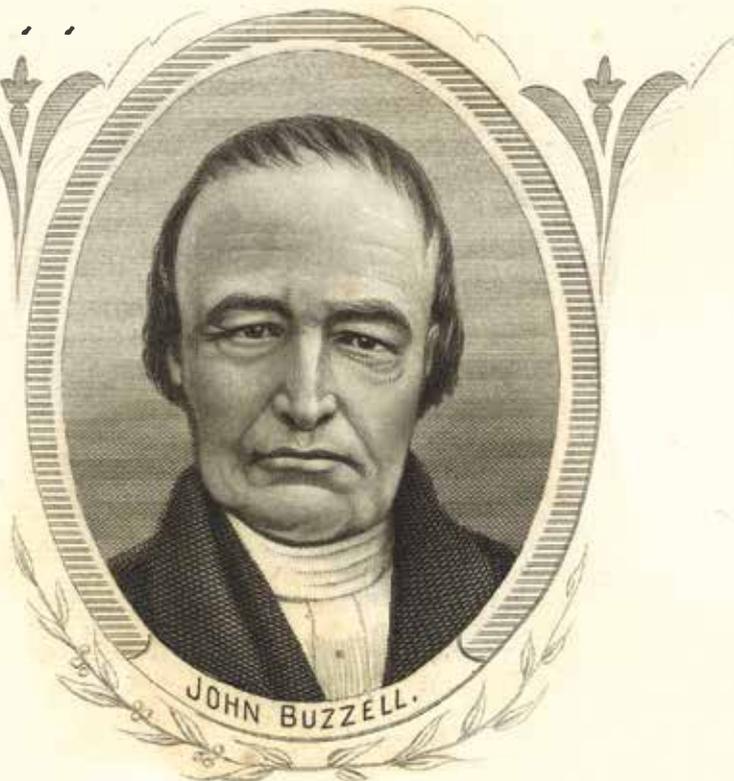


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MAGAZINE

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ROLE IN THE EXTENSION
OF GOD'S KINGDOM.

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First Glimpse >>

The Tassel

“Friends, family, distinguished guests, faculty, and graduates...”

As I began my carefully prepared baccalaureate address, I couldn't help but smile at the excited, eager faces across the front four rows of the auditorium. So much potential! And with graduation only a few days away, the members of the 2017 class hung on every word—all but one, that is.

As I shared the sermon over which I had prayed and agonized for months, a single graduate refused to meet my eyes. She didn't seem defiant, but she kept her gaze resolutely downcast, and I could tell she was fidgeting in her chair. At first, I tried to capture her attention, with little success. Then I tried to ignore her, to focus on the other students giving me their rapt attention. Yet, as minutes ticked by with no eye contact and no apparent interest, I couldn't help but wonder, “Was it something I said?”

It wasn't until the ride home that I got my answer. As we pulled away from the church, my wife turned to my daughter and demanded, “Why didn't you listen to your dad's sermon?”



Glancing in the rearview mirror, I was surprised to see a shocked look cross my daughter's face. “It was the tassel,” she protested. “The crazy thing came apart as we were walking down the aisle, and I was trying to put it back together before we walked out in front of everybody.” She paused. “It really was a good sermon, Dad. I was listening. I just wasn't looking.”

After a moment of awkward silence, we all laughed—another goofy memory to recall over coffee in the coming years.

A few days later, as I watched Victoria and her classmates cross the stage into the next phase of their lives, I couldn't help but ponder how easy it is to jump to conclusions about the younger generation(s), to criticize based on first (and often mistaken) impressions, to focus on perceived weaknesses, or to write off their Kingdom potential because of age or generational culture. What a

mistake! With this in mind, I am adopting three simple guidelines for my relationships with the next generation:

Stop stereotyping. Every generation has its share of shortcomings and successes. The very things one generation perceives as a crippling weakness may prove eventually to be the greatest strength. It is a mistake to demand the next generation to mirror our own.

Give grace to grow...and fail. Previous generations scoffed at some of the greatest young inventors in history—until their inventions revolutionized society. The same is true in the Church. With time and God's grace, we can be confident the next generation will get it right.

Embrace generational discipleship. Rather than criticizing, concentrate on modeling real and growing faith for the next generation. And remember, they are listening, even when they aren't looking. **ONE**

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Ron Hunter Jr. Receives Doctorate From Dallas Baptist University

Dallas, Texas—Ron Hunter Jr., executive director and CEO of Randall House Publications, graduated with a Ph.D. in leadership studies with a concentration in business from Dallas Baptist University (DBU) during spring commencement. Hunter selected the intensive program due to its emphasis on biblical servant leadership. The three-year slate of coursework included a summer intensive at Cook School of Leadership at DBU, for an introduction to biblical and foundational leadership theory; a stint in Washington, D.C., studying organizational change through the eyes of the founding fathers; and an intensive at Oxford University in England during the final year, to explore international and multi-cultural leadership through the eyes of early church fathers. The DBU Leadership Program produces Christian scholars, global thinkers, and servant leaders.

Of the 28-member cohort that began the program, only six students completed the course requirements and reached comprehensive oral and written testing. After testing, Hunter began research into how leaders engage engrained cultures resistant to change. His dissertation advanced ways to effect change to produce a stronger, healthier future. He successfully defended the dissertation in December 2016.

Dr. Hunter said, “I want to use this degree to lead Randall House to influence the denomination toward a healthy future and to continue mentoring other leaders in various ways.”

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CHURCH & HOME:

PARTNERS AND PARALLELS

CHRIS TALBOT

The Christian faith is no stranger to family. After all, we walk into church to greet Brother so-and-so, and his wife, Sister so-and-so, even though we can't trace any biological heritage to these close Christian friends. It soon becomes apparent the gospel connects Christians in a deep way that can be described only in familial terms.



When Jesus was alerted to His mother and brothers' presence during his public teaching, He pointed to His disciples and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother" (Matthew 12:49-50). The Apostle Paul expanded on this theme, addressing the church as a "household" or "family of God" (1 Timothy 3; 5:1-2; Titus 2:1-5). He told believers to respect fathers and mothers in the faith and to be brothers and sisters to one another. Both John and Paul saw themselves as fathers in the faith to younger believers (1 Corinthians 4:16; 1 Timothy 1:2; 1 John 2:14; 3:18; 5:21).¹

Within our own denomination, a renewed focus has been placed on familial, or generational, discipleship. This is called the D6 movement, based on Deuteronomy 6:7-9:

And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

In the New Testament, Paul instructed parents and children (Ephesians 6:1-4). What's vital to note, and often overlooked, is that both commands are given within the context of the faith community.² When Moses gave this command to parents, he explained it to a gathering of the Israelites. When Paul instructed the families in Ephesus, the letter was read to the entire church.

Does talking about the church being our family negate what God has planned for our nuclear families in our spiritual formation? When church becomes family, does family cease to be family? Or vice versa, when the family becomes church,

does the gathering of believers become null and void? I don't think this is the case, though imbalance can easily happen.

I would like to propose what Christians have argued for centuries: the Christian family and the church are deeply connected in God's redemptive plan. For the believer, the church is family and the family is church. Of course, that is not to say that the church and family are identical and synonymous.

Actually, the church and the family are distinctly different in many ways, each accomplishing tasks the other will not and cannot. While these two divine institutions are partners in spiritual formation, they are also parallels; they run alongside one another. As one author notes, "This two-fold approach is the foundation for comprehensive faith-at-home ministry—ministry that coordinates the God-ordained function of the Christian household with the church's role as a Christian's first family."³ Allow me to demonstrate how these two spheres are knitted together and vital in the spiritual formation of the Christian child.

Family as Church: A Brief Theology of Family

We must first understand what God intended when He created the "nuclear" family. God ordained the family before the Fall. The family institution was created before sin wrecked and broke the world. How did God intend that family to look? We may fully answer that question by giving a biblical definition of family as expressed by Andreas Köstenberger: "Primarily one man and one woman united in matrimony plus natural or adopted children and, secondarily, any other persons related by blood."⁴ This definition is reinforced and rooted in the familial models of the Old and New Testaments.

Second, though instituted before the Fall, the Christian family continues to

accomplish God's redemptive work in this world like no other institution. It is increasingly evident the family holds a singular position in God's will. Consider, for a moment, what Vigen Guroian writes concerning the parent-child relationship:

In our day hyper-individualism and exaggerated notions of personal autonomy flourish culturally and have influenced law. The religious sociologist Robert Bellah calls this ontological individualism—a belief that the individual is primary and that the individual's claims take precedence over community, which is thought to be derivative and artificial. This individualism is reflected conspicuously in current attitudes and opinions about marriage and divorce, abortion, and physician-assisted suicide, to name a few. . . . To the extent that these notions of individualism and autonomy influence contemporary thought on childhood, there is a tendency to define childhood apart from serious reflection on the meaning of parenthood. Yet a moment's pause might lead one to recognize that there is hardly a deeper characteristic of human life than the parent-child relationship. . . . The Christian faith would have us look more closely at the fundamental parent-child nexus.⁵

Guroian notes the profound effect parents have on their children. No cultural relationship is more influential than the parent-child relationship. This relationship is vital for cultivating the counter-cultural values important for life. In *Family-Based Youth Ministry*, Mark DeVries notes: "No one has more long-term interest in the students I work with than their parents do . . . families exert unparalleled influence on the development of the children's lives and character."⁶ This isn't just a pragmatic statement; it's a theological one. God intended for families to have more influence on the child than anyone or anything else.

Family Worship

What, then, is the primary way a family can be a “little church”? By worshipping together. This is not merely a practical solution to a significant problem. Family worship has its roots in Scripture. Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Job, Paul, and Peter all either practiced or promoted this idea of families worshipping together as a unit. A strong thread runs throughout Scripture, encouraging families to worship together—parents and children honoring God through adoration. Moreover, throughout history Christians have practiced family worship as an integral ingredient of their faith.

The Free Will Baptist Church Covenant reads, “We agree faithfully to discharge our obligations in reference to the study of the Scriptures, secret prayer, family devotions, and social worship;

and by self-denial, faith, and good works endeavor to ‘grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.’”⁷

One important truth of which we must remind ourselves is that family worship doesn’t have to be complicated. As Donald Whitney plainly encourages us, “Just read, pray, and sing.”⁸

READ: Read a passage of Scripture. For those with younger children, choose a storybook Bible,⁹ or a brief passage appropriate for their age. Read the passage or story together and make a few comments regarding what it means. As children get older, share heavier or lengthier passages.

PRAY: Since you already have the Bible open to a passage, allow that to lead your prayer. Pray whatever the applica-

tion might be from a given biblical story. Further, allow family members to offer various prayer requests.

SING: Have a hymnbook handy or sing memorable Christian songs. It doesn’t have to be all eight stanzas, but sing a song worshipfully with your family. Often, this can be the most enjoyable moment for children.

Before you know it, you’ve worshiped with your family. If you’ve read God’s truth, prayed in communion with Him, and worshiped through song, you’ve worshiped God with your family. This is easy to practice and easy to teach. Try to worship together as often as possible. If you are able to do it every day, great! If not, simply try to keep a consistent schedule.

FAMILY WORSHIP DOESN'T HAVE TO BE COMPLICATED



Generational Discipleship

Family discipleship is more than simply practicing family worship, though that's vital. Family discipleship also occurs during the "informal" moments. One author notes, "Responsible youth ministry in the church, though perhaps difficult to execute,

is simple to understand: it involves teaching and exhorting parents to raise their children biblically."¹⁰ Though it may sound cliché, Christian living must be verbalized and visualized for children. They must not only be taught the propositional truths of Scripture but also see them lived out. Look

for teachable moments to show how Christian truth applies, and if you're a ministry leader, encourage other parents to do the same. This might come during a drive to school or when your child expresses difficulty with organized sports or around the dinner table. The possibilities are endless.

About the Writer: A native of Tecumseh, Michigan, Chris Talbot now resides in Gallatin, Tennessee, where he teaches at Welch College. He is also pastor of youth and family at Sylvan Park FWB Church in Nashville, Tennessee, and assistant managing editor of the *D6 Family Ministry Journal*. He and his wife Rebekah have a son, William.

Adapted by permission from Re/Modeling Youth Ministry: www.WelchPress.com.

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- 1 Andreas J. Köstenberger and David W. Jones, *God, Marriage, and the Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 252-53.
 - 2 Scottie May, et al., *Children Matter: Celebrating Their Place in the Church, Family and Community* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 165-66.
 - 3 Timothy Paul Jones and John David Trentham, eds., *Practical Family Ministry: A Collection of Ideas for Your Church* (Nashville: Randall House, 2015), 13.
 - 4 Köstenberger and Jones, *God, Marriage, and the Family*, 85.
 - 5 Vigen Guroian, "The Ecclesial Family: John Chrysostom on Parenthood and Children," in *The Child and Christian Thought*, Marcia J. Bunge, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 61-62.
 - 6 Mark DeVries, *Family-Based Youth Ministry*, revised and expanded (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2004), 61.
 - 7 Free Will Baptist *Treatise*, (Nashville: National Association of Free Will Baptists, 2008), 1.
 - 8 Donald S. Whitney, *Family Worship* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2016), 44.
 - 9 I highly recommend Sally Lloyd-Jones, *The Jesus Story-Book Bible*. (Grand Rapids: ZonderKidz, 2007)
 - 10 Christopher Schlect, *Critique of Modern Youth Ministry*, 2 ed. (Moscow, ID: Canon, 2007), 17.



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The Call

BY REUBEN CASON

The call was intended to be a casual, routine chat with my daughter just to see how she and her family were doing.

After the usual conversation about life and family in general, she made a comment about a question her oldest son (my first grandchild) asked about the Tower of Babel. Immediately, I said, “That’s what my Sunday School lesson was about this past Sunday.” We started talking about the question, and I began to share my thoughts. After the conversation, I said, “You know, this is a good example of why we use D6 curriculum. Our family is in different towns and in different churches, but we all had the same lesson this past Sunday.”



***I realize
we need to
talk with our
children and
grandchildren
about the
things of the
Lord, as many
generations
before us have
done.***

D6 curriculum is based on the principles of Deuteronomy 6:6-7 “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”

After the conversation, I sat for a few moments and pondered what had happened. I was raised in a Christian home—a pastor’s home—and my parents taught me the Word of God. We went to Sunday School every Sunday, and even though we didn’t have D6 curriculum back then, my parents still talked to us about what we had learned that day. Years later, my wife and I, now with our own family, would talk to our children about what they learned in Sunday School. Now that our children are grown and married with families of their own, they take their children (our grandchildren) to Sunday School, and they, too, discuss what they learned in class that day.

Countless times, I have reflected back over that phone call and thanked the Lord we could participate in the discipleship experience facilitated by D6 curriculum. I realize we need to talk with our children and grandchildren about the things of the Lord, as many generations before us have done. But I can’t tell you how encouraged I was that day. We might not have had the conversation, and I might not have been able to share my thoughts with my daughter for her to pass along to my grandson if we had not had the same Sunday School lesson the previous Sunday.

Parents have the God-given responsibility to teach their children God’s Word and to “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4b). D6 curriculum is a great tool to help parents accomplish this goal. As parents and children walk into the Bible study classroom, they are taught the lesson from God’s Word on the same theme of Scripture. Even though the lesson will be geared to the appropriate age and the application may be different, the theme is the same, and often from the same passage of Scripture. Parents know what their children are studying from God’s Word and can be equipped with the knowledge and understanding they need to discuss the lesson with their children and help them apply the Word of God to their lives during the week.

Who knows, after a lesson, a daughter’s father may call, and they may have a conversation about the Tower of Babel, all because three different generations were studying the same lesson. I have forgotten the question regarding the Tower of Babel, but I will never forget the impact that moment had on my family. **ONE**

About the Writer: Reuben Cason is the promotional director for the North Carolina State Association of Free Will Baptists. He and His wife Terry have three children and seven grandchildren. Learn more about D6 Curriculum: D6family.com.

The SILENT MISSIONARIES

BY TIM AWTREY

A group of missionaries operate in the shadows. Always working, they are rarely seen. They are the silent missionaries. They are our children.

Our children don't like to draw attention to themselves, yet they are a vital part of the ministry in Bulgaria. They are our secret weapons.

Yanna and Alex have been extremely important to the work in Bulgaria. I remember when Yanna first began school in Svishtov. Through her school studies, we immediately began to meet many new people in the community. Her studies eventually led to the opportunity for me to teach English in that school, expanding our area of influence for the gospel.

We would never have had the chance to witness to many people in the community if it wasn't for Yanna. And, yet, it was an incredible challenge and sacrifice for her. You can imagine the difficulties she faced—foreign language, new school, new culture, etc. We often talk about the challenges missionary parents face in adapting to a new mission field. However, our children are confronted with these same difficulties, often to an even greater extent. Yanna has grown up to be a beautiful and wonderful young lady, and much of the success we now see is a direct result of her influence in Bulgaria.

When Alex was young, Lydia took him to the park to play. As Alex played with the other children, Lydia talked with the mothers watching. Alex's playtime in the

park provided a great chance to meet many new people. As Alex has grown, he has served as construction worker, tour guide, and translator for our ministry and for people who travel to Bulgaria on mission trips.

A few years ago, Alex met another boy at a summer camp, and they became friends. Through their friendship the boy's parents and their friends began to attend church. As a result of Alex's friendship, Josh Provow is now leading a Bible study with this group. We hope, one day, the Bible study group will become a new church plant. All this came about because of Alex's friendship with another boy. How many 14-year-olds do you know who can put "helping plant two new churches" on their resumé?

And yet, as I write this, we are dragging Alex with us all over the country while we raise support. He has missed out on countless youth activities, birthday parties, and friendships because of his mission work.

I am sure all our missionary families can give you hundreds of examples of ways their chil-

dren silently, but significantly, contribute to their missionary work.

They are an integral part of our mission work—often in the shadows, rarely seen, and seldom acknowledged. They are our silent missionaries. They are our children. **ONE**



About the Writer: Tim Awtrey and his family are pioneering a Free Will Baptist church planting movement in Bulgaria. The first phase includes establishing a healthy Free Will Baptist church in Svishtov to serve as a model for future church plants throughout the country. The Awtreys will return to Bulgaria in September, leaving Yanna behind to attend college.

Experiences > Stuff

BY JOSHUA
EIDSON



I recently returned from a short, weekend getaway with my parents, sibling and her family, and my own wife and children. The trip reminded me of the value of time shared with loved ones and the memories created with one another. It has caused me to be a bit nostalgic, reminiscing over past experiences and the memories created. This trip and my recent interest in the benefits of minimalism has helped me realize that most, if not all, of my favorite memories revolve around experiences with family and friends—*not* stuff.

As we played tourist throughout this recent weekend trip, I recalled similar trips as a child. I always thought I needed a souvenir, some trinket related to the experience that would hold my interest during the trip and briefly afterward before being lost or forgotten. The money I cost my parents and myself is embarrassing. Not that all souvenirs are wasteful, but the level my younger self took it to was unhealthy. I still occasionally purchase items to help my family recall experiences, but today I'm more conscientious of that reflex to buy. As I watched my kids shop, they also were interested and no doubt wanted to get souvenirs as well. But, we didn't dwell on the stuff and reminded them they didn't need the stuff. Instead, we left the weekend with experiences with family and not baggage of cheap junk.

After the trip, I found my oldest daughter cutting out maps from the brochures of the places we visited. When I asked what she was doing, she informed me she wanted the maps for her and her sister to use as play maps. Again, this made me rethink how memories shape what we value. The trip was over, but it was the free tour guide pamphlets getting reused and repurposed to create new memories and experiences for my children. It brought me joy to see she was unconcerned about stuff we didn't buy and excited about her experience. The simple remnants of the trip itself inspired more imaginary adventures for her and her siblings. Money can't buy precious memories made with those dearest to us.

We should give ourselves permission to spend money to have fulfilling experiences and to achieve personal and familial goals. The money we save by not always buying

the "latest and greatest" will enable us to pursue those more fulfilling aspects of life. So, when you have the choice to spend money on an experience that will provide meaningful time with family or friends or to purchase the latest gadget, remember the experience will almost always provide longer-lasting, meaningful memories. As Joshua Field Milburn and Ryan Nicodemus (The Minimalists) are known for saying, "Love people; use things. The opposite never works."

The Board of Retirement office is a resource for our denomination to help its members learn to use and invest money wisely, so they can spend their most valuable asset—time—to create memorable experiences with family, friends, and ministries. How can we assist you to prepare for a successful future ministry? 

About the Writer: Joshua Eidson is accounting administrator for the Free Will Baptist Board of Retirement. A native of Middle Tennessee, Joshua graduated from Welch College in 2007, where he earned a B.S. in business administration. He and his wife Rachel have three children.



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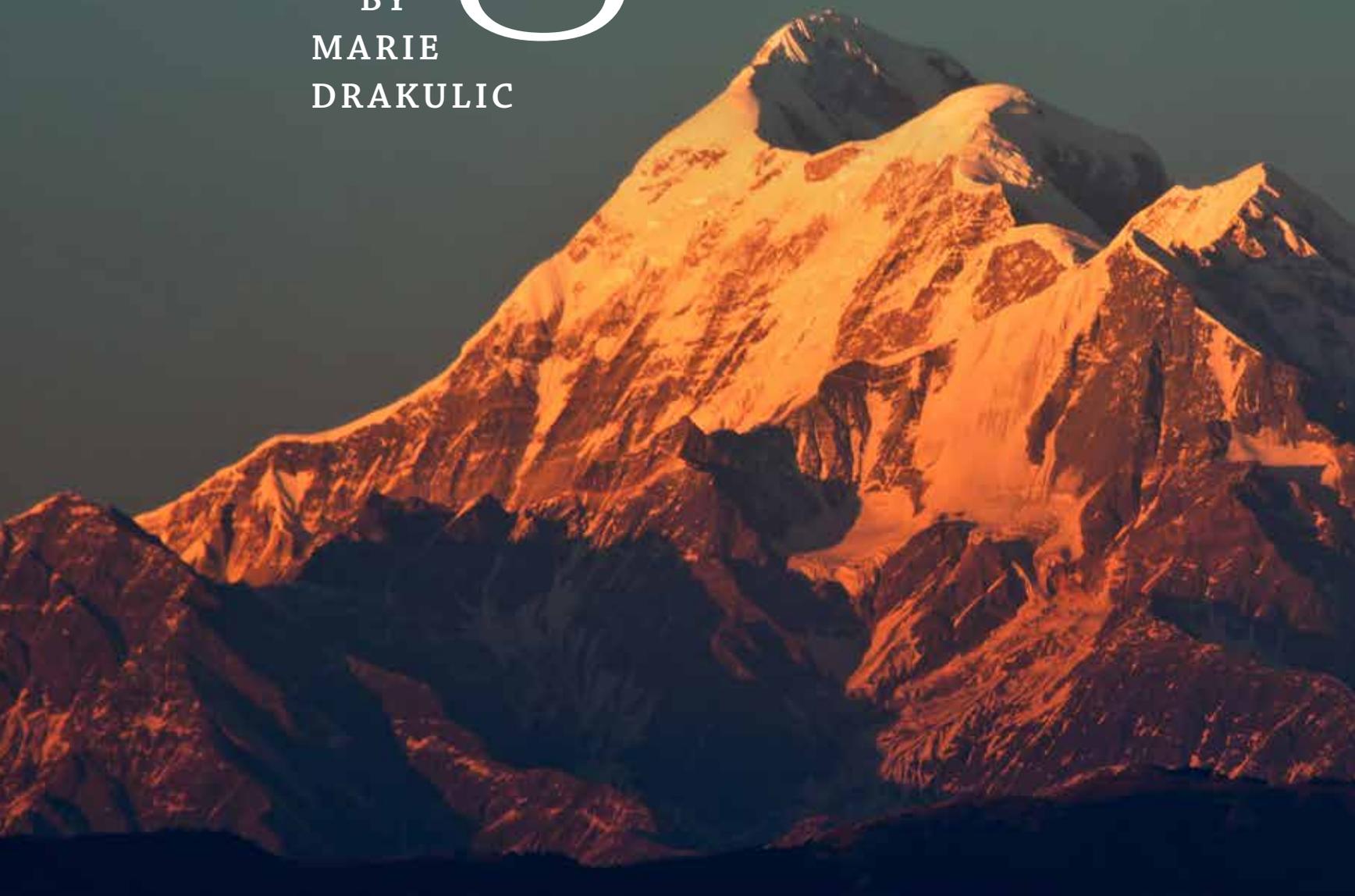
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ON THE
MOUNTAIN... ●

Again

BY
MARIE
DRAKULIC



I feel like I live on Abraham's mountain.

The full story of Abraham's greatest test can be found in Genesis 22:1-19. After my son Austin was diagnosed with cancer in 2015, I read that story with fresh eyes. One phrase in particular jumped out at me: "Take your son, whom you love." God knew Abraham loved Isaac. Well, of course God knew Abraham loved his son, but He took a moment to acknowledge it before asking him to do the unthinkable, to sacrifice his son. I felt as though God was saying, "Yes, I know Austin is your son and you love him. Yes, I know you are so afraid of losing someone you love. Yes, I know you don't want this. But will you trust me?" And on my good days, I said "yes." I "laid my Isaac down."

Austin finished treatment in October 2015 and was declared to have no signs of cancer the following December. But brain cancer is a tricky thing. It doesn't show up in blood work. Being at a high risk for relapse, Austin must return every few months for an MRI to check for new tumor growth. Every time, it feels as though I'm walking up the mountain again, not knowing what will happen when we reach the top. When we return home with the gift of more time, those around me, those who have been praying feverishly, rejoice. I want to rejoice with them, and sometimes I do, but other times I can only breathe a sigh of relief. I know we will be returning to that mountain again.

At times, it feels like a cruel joke. I don't know if it makes me a "bad Christian" or my faith weak, but my insides shake and my heart twists and I hold my breath each time...through every MRI, with every random headache, every time we wait for results. I should be anxious about nothing (Philippians 4:6), but I cannot describe what it is like to raise my son to become a man and, at the same time, accept the fact he may never reach graduation. I want to know: "Will this journey end in death? Can you give me a heads-up, Lord? How many times will we climb this mountain? When will I have peace this is over?"

"We are not necessarily doubting that God will do the best for us; we are wondering how painful the best will turn out to be."

—C.S. Lewis

The question probably isn't "will there be another mountain?" but "what will I do when we get there?" I can rage and rant. I can throw myself on the altar of self-pity. I can cry out and lament. I can worship. I can surrender. I can comfort others taking the same journey. I can trust. Do you know that Jeremiah 29:11 was spoken to people facing 70 years in exile? The Lord looked at the struggle ahead of them and told them the plans He had for them were plans for *good* and not disaster, to give them a *future and a hope*. Am I the only one who finds this ironic? Seventy years of captivity in a foreign land doesn't sound like a good, hopeful future to me. But God is so much bigger than I am.

Truthfully, I have run the gambit of emotions on the mountain—grief, anger, sorrow, joy, gratitude, worship, shock, and melancholy. The time on the mountain has been longer this trip, and the waiting is excruciating. I do not know the outcome. I can't see past the next 48 hours. I'm terrified. I am questioning. But God is gracious and patient with me. His shoulders are broad. He stands on the mountain beside us. And His glory revealed will be grand—no matter how this story ends.

"Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications...I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning. Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption" (Psalm 130:1-2, 5-7). **ONE**

The CAREGIVER'S 23rd Psalm By Danny Baer

My Lord is my Caregiver, I shall not want.

He makes me sit in a place where I feel comfortable. He provides the food that I need and sometimes, I actually like.

He keeps me refreshed and encouraged.

He makes me do what is best for me although I may not understand why.

Death is closing in upon me and it is easy for me to be afraid, but you are nearby. Your guiding hand—though at times firm, and familiar voice—though sometimes stern, help calm my fears.

You are taking care of me as best you can even though I have enemies—the disease that has invaded my body—the condition that is robbing me of my memory—the doctors and nurses whom I do not know—my new environment that is not my home! (Oh, how I want to go home!).

You make sure that I am cared for—that I am bathed—that I am clothed—that I have a good bed—that my medicines are taken.

You are caring for me better than I could have imagined. (Some of the things you are doing, a child should never have to do for or to a parent, but you are doing them!)

I may not be aware of or appreciate your loving service, but know this. It is clear that you are determined that this care will continue until I say my last word, close my eyes one more time and take my final breath. I rest in your care. ©2016



In the beloved 23rd Psalm, David used his role as a shepherd to describe a personal relationship with God. As the sheep are completely dependent upon the shepherd for food, water, protection, care, and guidance, David realized he was totally reliant upon his Lord.

Those who heard the 23rd Psalm in David's day immediately understood even the subtlest nuances it communicated. Today, hardly anyone knows a sheep owner, much less an actual shepherd. We understand the psalm, not from experience, but vicariously through sermons, Sunday School lessons, and books like Tim Keller's *A Shepherd Looks at the 23rd Psalm*. It might be helpful

if we considered this psalm in terms of a situation where we are totally responsible for the wellbeing of another. The role of a caregiver fits that scenario quite well, and most adults are either involved in caregiving or know someone who is.

Our society is aging. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that senior citizens (adults over 65) will number 89 million by 2050 (www.cdc.gov/aging). According to a report by the National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP, "29% of the U.S. population provides care for a chronically ill, disabled, or aged family member or friend" (www.caregiveraction.org). More than 65 million people in the U.S.

average more than 20 hours each week and 20% of their personal income in caring for others (AARP Research).

Caring for the elderly is becoming commonplace. Some still live in their homes but require special attention; some live in the home of the caregiver; others reside in nursing homes or extended care facilities. Even though the situations vary, the emotions, struggles, questions, and needs are very similar.

"The Caregiver's 23rd Psalm" is a simple attempt to compare our relationship with God to a relationship that is reality for millions. It is not an attempt to replace Scripture but an effort to provide a new perspective on this timeless passage. **ONE**

About the Writer: Dr. Danny Baer has been an ordained Free Will Baptist pastor for more than 43 years. He and his wife Debbie serve at Southeastern FWB College. Danny serves as the moderator of the Randall Association in North Carolina, and is a Trustee on the Free Will Baptist Board of Retirement. The Baers have four children and six grandchildren.

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Age	Rate
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70	5.1%
75	5.8%
80	6.8%
85	7.8%
90	9.0%

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GOD'S GIRLS

BY EMILY FAISON

For adolescents trying to navigate girl world, truth can often be veiled in the murkiness of everything our culture presents as good. Girls must navigate technology-oriented social challenges and screen-driven sexuality—on top of good old-fashioned female emotions and girl politics. We know the human struggle with sexuality is age-old, but it seems each new generation encounters sexuality from a different vantage point.

The good news is that though some details of these challenges may be unique to this upcoming generation, solutions are still rooted in Scripture. The speakers at *Shine!* rely on the truth of God's Word to guide everything they speak about, from body image to smartphone apps. In each session, whether for moms, youth leaders, or girls, the most simple and yet most important message of all is that we are women created in God's image. Whether an uncertain adolescent or a seasoned mentor, women find purpose, identity, and accountability in God.

Beth Bryant's first session for girls focuses on identity. Pushing back against the cultural norm of putting price tags on girls based on beauty, talent, athleticism, popularity, and performance, Beth shows girls they are already bought with the price of Christ's blood. Rather than being defined by their failures or their talents, girls learn their intrinsic value and identity come from being created in the image of God. That knowledge "gives them freedom to live as God's Girls—freedom to grow and change and learn and love and develop into the women He has created them to be," says Beth.

After laying this foundation of identity as "God's Girls," attendees learn the physical truth regarding girls' bodies as created by God. Surveys conducted by the *Shine!* team make it clear girls are already learning much about sexuality, their bodies, and relationships from non-scriptural sources, at earlier and earlier ages. By relying on the scientific truth of God's creation in coordination with the truth of Scripture, Rachel Bryant, an RN in the OB/GYN field, presents the basics of what girls need to understand about their bodies: God created male and female, determined by chromosomes; that women are carefully and specifically designed; that humans are intentionally created and not mistakes; and that God designed sex for married man and woman only. "The truth society forgets is that this is the best plan," Rachel teaches.

These sessions build a comfortable, safe space that lends itself well to the Q & A time, when girls can ask any questions they have about their bodies, sexuality, relationships, friendships, and more, and receive an honest answer without judgment. Through these sessions and the Q & A time that follows, Rachel and Beth show girls how to apply practically what it means to be "God's Girls" in everyday life at school, church, and home. Girls are equipped with strategies to keep themselves safe; they learn how to exit uncomfortable situations; and they also learn practical strategies for stronger communication with parents and friends. When girls learn God intentionally and carefully created their bodies in His image, they are better able to understand the importance of taking care of their bodies. They are better prepared to navigate relationships with friends, with boys, with their teammates and classmates, and with their families.

A Grandmother's Legacy

IF YOU ARE A GRANDPARENT, YOU KNOW THE JOY THAT COMES FROM SPENDING TIME WITH YOUR GRANDCHILDREN.



Nothing melts your heart quite like little arms around your neck while you hear the words, "I love you, Grandma!" I take seriously my role of being a fun grandparent, supplying my two granddaughters with things they love and want, and letting them do a few things my own children remind me they were not allowed to do. Lately, though, I've given a lot of thought to my responsibility as a grandparent.

What is the biblical role of grandparents? Is it just to "pray and play"? While the word "grandparent" doesn't appear very often, many Scriptures refer to "children's children," and "father's father," indicating generational responsibilities to pass along faith in God. Psalm 78 refers to telling the coming generations about the glorious deeds of the Lord. Think about the implications of the many references to "the God of your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Responsibility doesn't seem to end simply with the next generation.

I want to be just as intentional about my grandparenting as I was with my parenting. As parents, we taught our children about God regularly, in as many ways as we could. I want to create opportunities to tell my grandchildren about God supplying needs and answering prayer. I want to help them learn to love Scripture and help them memorize it, the way my grandmother did for me. I want them to see me living my faith. I want conversations about God to be a normal thing between us. The distance between us will make this challenging, but leaving a legacy is worth the effort!

By Diana Bryant, WNAC Board Chairwoman

Meanwhile, moms and youth leaders hear sessions on leading by example, being prepared to handle the heavy topics girls face, understanding technology trends popular among the girls they mentor, with practical tips for helping girls navigate a tech-saturated youth culture.

“You are going to stand before God and be accountable for your girls someday, whether as a mom, a youth leader, or a pastor” says Sarah Sargent. The first step toward reaching and understanding girls is for parents and leaders to learn just what girls are aware of, surrounded by, and even participating in. As in previous sessions, practicality is central to everything Ana Batts and Sarah Sargent teach. “We would never drop our girls off in a city we know nothing about and expect them to stay safe or find their way out,”

explains Sarah. “Yet we do this every day. We leave them in ‘Internet City’ or ‘Smartphone Village,’ and we assume they will be safe.” Sarah combats this naiveté by making parents and leaders aware of various apps, software, and popular sites and providing solutions for keeping teens safe online—just like you would in a new destination.

While Sarah offers practical solutions for leading in a digital age, Ana challenges women to make practical changes to increase their influence on girls’ lives. These sessions are saturated in Scripture and prayer, as they remind women of the responsibility they have. Ultimately, Ana and Sarah remind women grace is not a one-time gift for moms and leaders or the girls they influence. Women know the goal of keeping girls on a godly path can end up looking like a list of dos and don’ts. But we also know Jesus came for more than just a list of dos and don’ts.

Our emphasis on “the list” can cause us to miss out on our identity as God’s Girls, redeemed recipients of love and grace. Just as the girls learn about their identity as God’s Girl, the adults get a reminder about the gift of grace that allows us to dwell in Christ.

From mom to grandmother, youth leader, or mentor, we have generational responsibilities to young women. All *Shine!* speakers explore tools, strategies, and resources to equip women of all ages and influence to have conversations about what it means to be one of “God’s Girls.” By the time the girls and sponsors leave, they are ready for conversations on the drive home and coming weeks to compound what they learn at *Shine!* Many of these conversations will be tough, and implementing all of these strategies may be challenging, but the eternal results are worth it. **ONE**

About the Writer: Emily Faison graduated in 2016 from Florida State University with a M.A. in Literature.



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Working *With* Generations

BY JOHN BRUMMITT

“A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children’s children: but the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just” (Proverbs 13:22).

When we are young, we love spending time with our grandparents. Why? Because they are not the primary adults raising us. For the most part, their job is spoiling the grandkids. Whether that means always having candy in a purse or pocket or taking them for ice cream, most grandparents, especially Americans, view this as their main grandparenting responsibility. A quick glance at television or social media makes it clear this is what the world expects from grandparents. But grandparenting doesn’t end there for the Christian.

Over and over, the Bible teaches us to

work hard at raising our kids until *their* children are grown, passing down beliefs not only to our kids but to our grandkids as well. This isn’t the picture painted by the world today. From the world’s perspective, we should be “hands off” after they leave home. We know this isn’t reality, and most children don’t want parents to stop parenting. The problem is amplified when it comes to financial matters. The world’s perspective insists that parents and grandparents are simply a bank to lend or give funds to kids and grandkids. Again, Scripture teaches that we have a much bigger responsibility to our children and grandchildren.

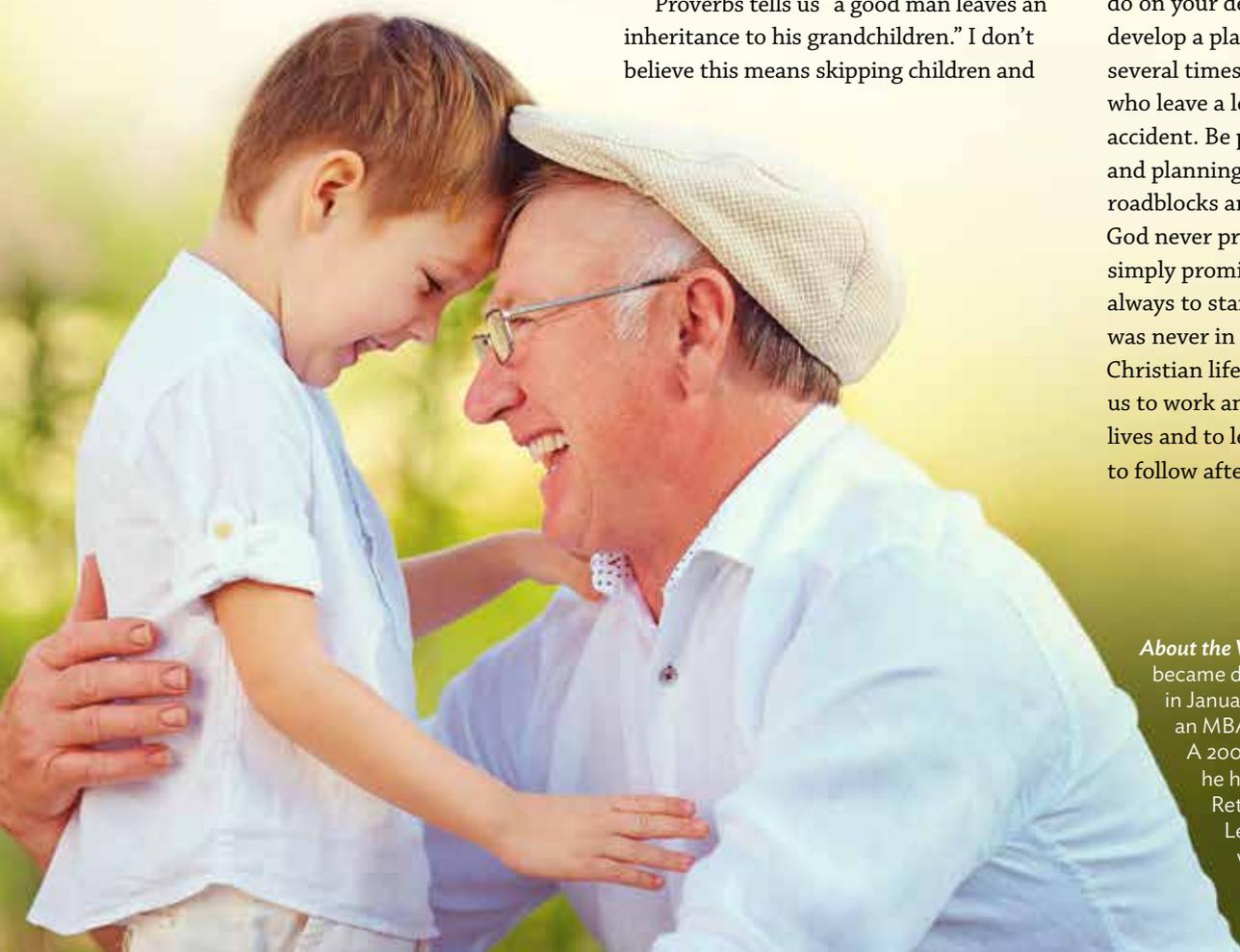
Proverbs tells us “a good man leaves an inheritance to his grandchildren.” I don’t believe this means skipping children and

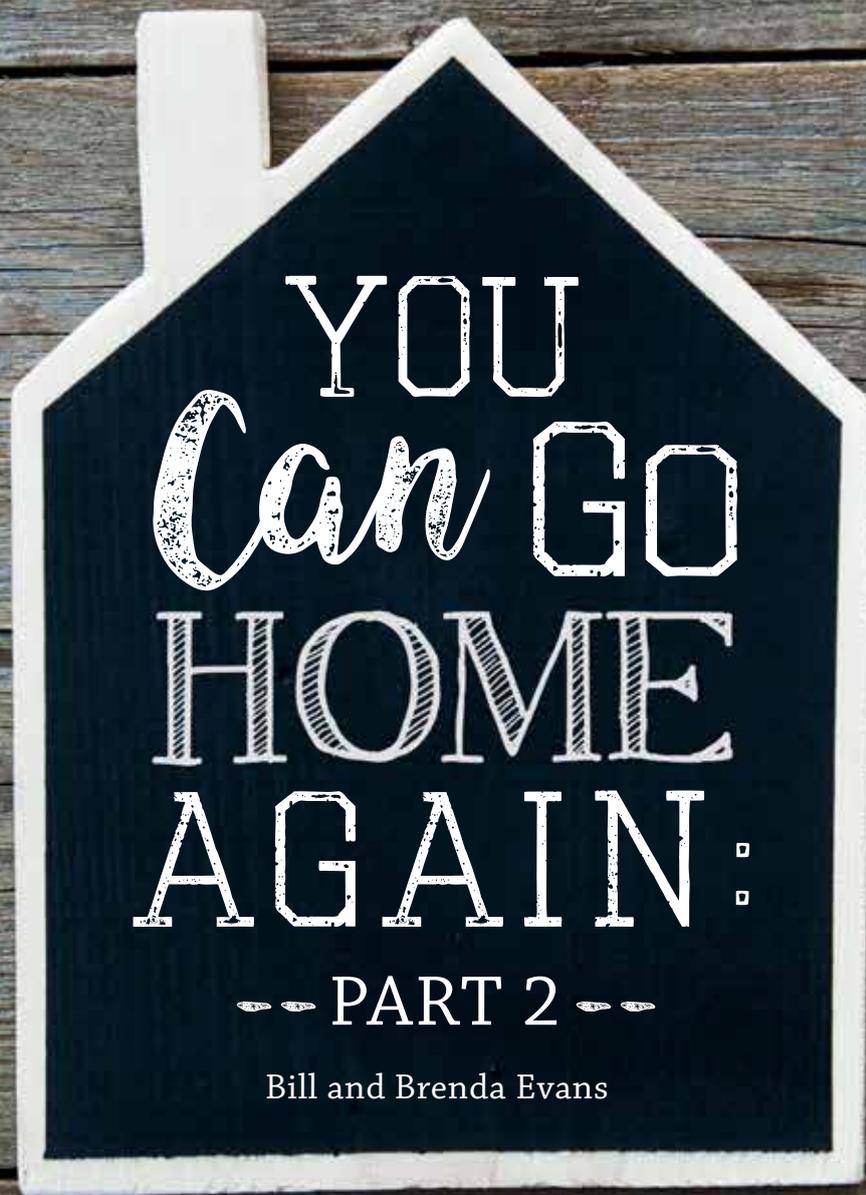
going straight to grandchildren, but to leave an inheritance that spans multiple generations, a legacy carried through your family long after you are gone.

What does this really look like? Does it mean you need a vast fortune for your kids and their kids and grandkids? Maybe. Does it mean passing down a good family name so your children are well respected and honored by your life? Yes. Does it mean passing down your faith so your family continues to follow Christ long after you are gone? Definitely. Could it mean you need to do all three? Absolutely.

Legacy planning isn’t something you do on your deathbed. Start early and develop a plan to be tested and reworked several times in your lifetime. People who leave a legacy don’t leave one by accident. Be purposeful in your goals and planning and expect to encounter roadblocks and hardships along the way. God never promised us an easy life. He simply promised never to leave us and always to stand by us, but an easy life was never in the plans. Don’t confuse the Christian life for easy street. God expects us to work and strive to live righteous lives and to leave a legacy for our families to follow after we are gone. **ONE**

About the Writer: John Brummitt became director of the Board of Retirement in January 2016. He graduated in 2011 with an MBA from Tennessee Tech University. A 2004 graduate of Welch College, he has been with the Board of Retirement since the spring of 2006. Learn more about retirement options: www.BoardofRetirement.com.





We recently sat down with [MELVIN](#) and [ANNE WORTHINGTON](#) in the kitchen of Melvin's homeplace in Ayden, North Carolina, to talk about that topic of going home again.

Despite what Thomas Wolfe said, Melvin and Anne Worthington have proven you can go home again. This is Part 2 of a recent conversation we enjoyed with Melvin and Anne around the kitchen table at his home place in Ayden, North Carolina. The couple came back to Ayden after more than 40 years of pastoral and denominational ministry.

EVANS: *Melvin, we get the impression this house looks a lot like it did when you were growing up.*

MELVIN: It does. And that's on purpose, mostly thanks to Anne.

ANNE: When Melvin's parents died—I've always called them Mama and Daddy—we wanted to keep it the same. We live in a newer house next door, but Melvin wanted his office here. So it's there, in the next room. Even the pictures are still where Mama hung them. The floral wool rug in the living room she loved so much, the sofa and chairs, Melvin and Milton's bedroom, their sister's room, the furniture—all the same.

MELVIN: Even our guns are still in the same closet they always were.

ANNE: I've replaced a few curtains, and we had the bathroom reworked, but that's about it. Our children, Lydia and Daniel, love being here. Lydia and her family stay in this house when they come. Both of them plan to come back to the farm when Melvin and I are gone.

MELVIN: Anne has kept up all of the landscaping, too.

ANNE: I can't stand to stay inside all the time. I'd go crazy. So, I plant flowers, trim shrubs, and do the landscaping here and at our house. Mama planted those azaleas out by the driveway many years ago, mostly white and purple. The purple ones thrive better, so I'm losing some of the white ones and can't do anything about it. That distresses me. I've done the landscaping at our church, too, although I've had to give up most of the outdoor work there. It's harder now that I'm 80, but I just can't stay inside.

EVANS: *What about those boxed up pecans we saw? You must have pecan trees.*

ANNE: We do, and I pick them up every year. There were fewer last fall than the year before, but enough. I'll have them cracked then start giving them away. I've given away hundreds of pounds over the years.

EVANS: *With all this land, two houses, the landscaping, the animals you take care of, and your church work, the two of you aren't bored in retirement, are you?*

MELVIN: There's no room in my vocabulary for the word bored, or Anne's either.

EVANS: *So, are you still making bucket lists, still things you want to do?*

MELVIN: Not really, because in many ways, I've done all I want to do. But as far as preaching, I'm not ready to hang it up. I'm still preaching and teaching new material, and I've never lost the wonder of it. Don't think I ever will.

ANNE: I also teach. I started a women's through-the-Bible class years ago, and I'm still going. It's work, but I like the study and research and writing. I sing in the choir and a trio, do bulletin boards, and decorate the church every season.

MELVIN: Milton and I are co-pastors of Liberty, so we divide the preaching and teaching. If I introduce a book, he'll do the first section, and I'll do the next and so on; so we alternate. We still sing as well. As for the farm, I rent out the land. Last year we grew mostly soybeans and sweet potatoes. Of course, we've got animals—donkeys, the llama, cattle, and the other things that you saw out there. Anne and I come over here early every morning and tend to them. I'm also in Rotary Club. One of our projects is Meals on Wheels. I like doing that. You know, we old people want our food on time, so we make sure those people get it. They count on us.

EVANS: *Let's shift gears a bit, because I remember something you hinted at earlier in our conversation about being called. You said both you and your dad were called by the Lord.*

MELVIN: I just meant that I believe Daddy was called to farm, just as much as I was called to preach. And so that's what we each did. Before I ever settled on which college to go to, he talked to

me about going to North Carolina State, studying agriculture, and coming back to farm. When I wanted to go another direction, he came to grips with it and didn't fight it. He was happy for me. His calling influenced me to be the person I have been in the ministry. I saw his faithfulness and integrity and contentment. He showed me the way. He believed the Lord was in control and just trusted Him. That's what I've practiced as well.

EVANS: *What about you, Anne? Did you feel a special call from the Lord?*

ANNE: I've always wanted to serve Him, and I've wanted Melvin to, as well. I was happy when the Lord called him to preach. In fact, I said to him, "I told you so." My father was not a preacher, but he was a kind servant of the Lord. When I was three or four years old, I had a ruptured appendix. The doctor thought I would die. Mom and Dad asked the Lord to spare my life, and they promised to give me to Him for whatever He wanted me to do, and they did. My father worked on a large dairy farm, and we were poor, but he was faithful to the Lord until he died at age 95. He gave and taught in our church in Zurich Lake, Illinois, and helped others. Mom too. Her mother had died when she was six, so after Mom finished sixth grade she had to quit school. As I was growing up, she worked in a factory. They both did what they could to help me go to Columbia Bible College because they had given me to the Lord. They were good people.

EVANS: *You are both 80, yet still very active in the Lord's work and on the farm as well. What does the future look like for you all?*

ANNE: I want to keep going, but especially I want to be known as a kind servant of the Lord like my father was, and I think I have been.

MELVIN: Being a faithful and consistent steward of our resources is my goal. That's what I believe in, and that's why we are here in Ayden on the farm. I

also try to guide Liberty, our church, to manage well.

BE
SOMETHING
BEFORE
YOU DO
SOMETHING,

I have a stewardship burden for our denomination as a whole. Anne and I have funded a Unitrust at Free Will Baptist Foundation. It gives us some income now, but the important thing is that at

our deaths, the remaining funds go to the Together Way endowment that will benefit the denomination's departments and commissions. I like the idea of helping our work long into the future. That's why we have the Unitrust.

EVANS: *Melvin, you've just recently retired from the board of FWB Foundation after serving 12 years. What have you learned from serving as a board member?*

MELVIN: I really enjoyed it. It has kept me involved without being in the spotlight, and I was ready for that. The Foundation has made quiet and steady progress. David Brown, director, has broadened the umbrella beyond what it was when I was Executive Secretary

for the denomination. He's worked well with the other departments, brought in Cornerstone for estate planning, and this year the Foundation made half a million dollars in grant money available. The Foundation's purpose is to serve our denomination as a whole, and it's doing that. As a denomination, we've come a long way since I came on as Executive Secretary in 1979.

EVANS: *Any final word?*

MELVIN: It goes back to that thing I learned as a young college student: you have to be something before you do something. I want to be a good steward then I can do what God wants me to do as long as I live. **ONE**

About the Writer: Bill and Brenda Evans live in Ashland, Kentucky. Bill is former director of the Free Will Baptist Foundation and Brenda is a retired English teacher. Visit www.fwbgifts.org for more information on planned giving that benefits your favorite ministry.

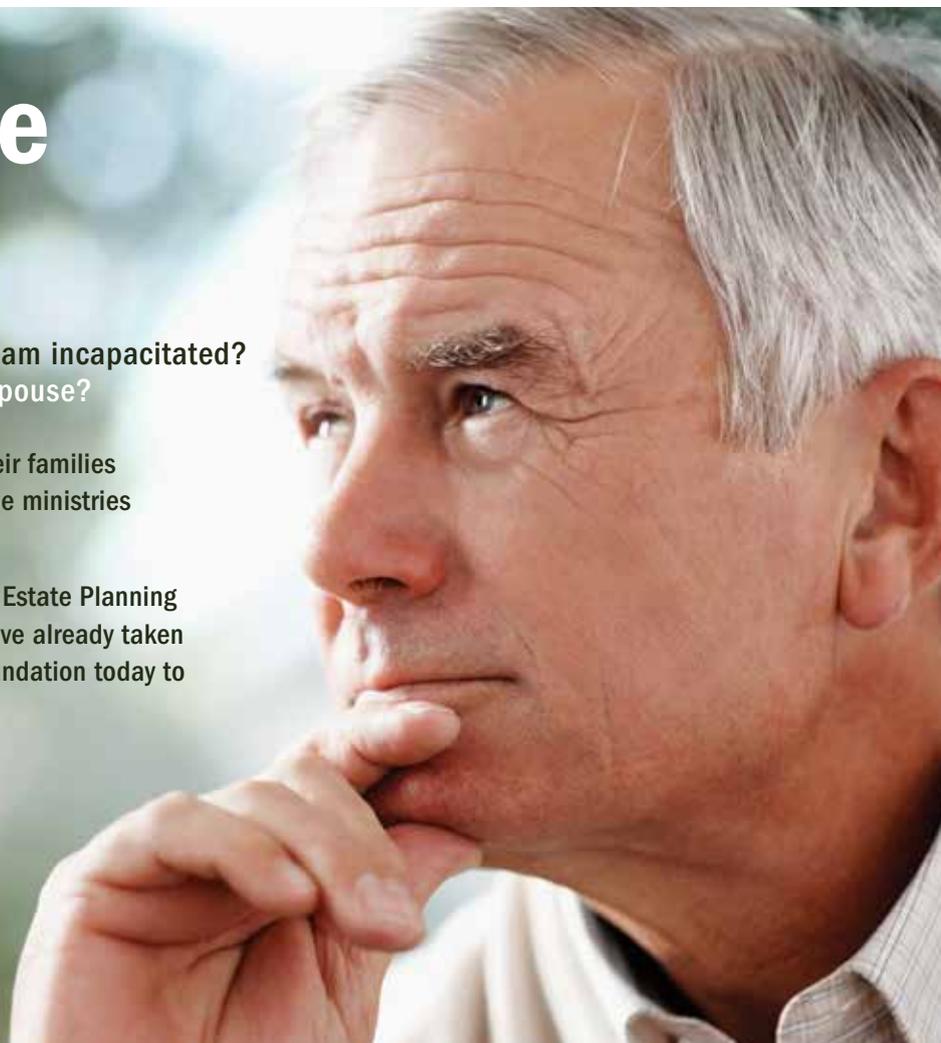
What about the “what ifs”?

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Passing the **DABA** BY CLINT MORGAN



Cultures often complicate matters, such as determining when a child is an adult. Often, the child thinks he is ready to be on his own long before the parents do. Generally, this leads to conflict in the family. Some children go out on their own in spite of the reasoning or protests of the “not so smart” adults. On the other hand, some parents may push their children to take on life without having properly prepared them to do so. No matter how you look at this, variables make this process a tricky business.

Among the Lobi people of Côte d’Ivoire, parents face similar challenges. The Lobi have a particular “rite of passage” that signals to their son, and the community, that he has liberty to leave his father’s compound and go out on his own.

I’m not convinced the Lobis are much better at this transition than we are. The fact is Lobi parents often keep their sons close to home long past the time they should be liberated. As long as a son is living in his father’s compound, not necessarily in his father’s house, all the work he does in the fields helps feed

the whole family. It doesn’t matter if he is married and has children, he is culturally bound to stay under his parents’ control until his father decides it is time for him to leave the compound and go out on his own.

The rite of passage is relatively simple, but very important in the world of the Lobi. When the father determines the time is right, he will present his son a “daba” prepared specifically for the occasion. A daba is a short-handled hoe used for work in the fields. With this tool, the Lobis clear the ground, prepare the

field for planting, and work constantly to battle the weeds that infest their crops.

After receiving the daba, the young man can leave his father’s courtyard, build his own home, plant his own fields, and carry on the Lobi tradition of passing the daba to his own sons when he determines the time is right.

Church leaders often commit the same error in determining when their members are ready to take on a task. In fact, some Christians never take any responsibility in their local church. I am convinced ALL believers should have a role within their local assembly. Leaders should teach, train, and encourage church members to play their God-designed role in going into the “fields that are white unto harvest.” Church leaders need to “pass the daba” to mature believers and lead the local congregation to send them into the fields.

A study of Acts 13:1-3 gives a biblical image of what a Lobi might view as a spiritual rite of passage or “passing of the daba.” Maybe our churches need to formalize our recognition of believers as they take on their role in the “fields that are white unto harvest.”

Acts 13:1-3—*Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.* **ONE**

About the Writer: Clint Morgan has been general director of International Missions since 2011. Learn more: www.fwbgo.com.

Around the World >>

Foundation Grants Expand IM Ministry

Antioch, TN—In a letter dated April 19, 2017, David Brown, director of the Free Will Baptist Foundation, announced the Foundation's grant committee awarded \$95,000 to International Missions for several projects.

The Mission submitted grant requests totaling \$317,500 for a variety of projects unfunded by the budget. The following projects received grant funding:

- **Living Water Project (Kenya), \$30,000**—Outside of the Samburu's need for the gospel, water continues to be one of their most pressing needs. The area receives only three to eight inches of rain annually. Not only is water scarce, it is often contaminated and unsafe. These funds will allow at least two wells to be drilled in Barsalinga, Kenya.
- **Renovation of the Miley House (Côte d'Ivoire), \$20,000**—The house that served as home for pioneer missionaries Dr. Laverne and Lorene Miley will soon serve as a guesthouse for families of patients. Also, short-term medical teams will lodge there. It has been 35 years since the Mileys occupied the property.
- **Renovation of the Lee House (Côte d'Ivoire), \$20,000**—Also located on the Doropo Hospital compound, the former home of Sherwood and Vada Lee will be renovated to house medical missionaries from Cuba. Extensive renovations will provide the Cuban doctor and her family a safe place to live near the Doropo Hospital.

- **Cedros del Libano Dormitory Remodel (Cuba), \$15,000**—

A legacy of pioneer missionaries Pop and Mom Willey, the Cedars of Lebanon seminary property was purchased in the 1940s. Funds will be used to remodel the women's dormitory, including rewiring to remedy currently exposed electrical wires, properly plumbing restrooms so all facilities are usable, and completing unfinished space to allow safe housing of 172 women and children.

- **House Churches (Cuba), \$10,000**—While constructing new church buildings in Cuba is not allowed, the government does permit the Cuban FWB Association to purchase houses. These funds will provide at least two new places of worship for the growing Cuban church.

"We cannot measure the eternal impact these funds will have," Clint Morgan, general director of International Missions, gratefully expressed. "As the Simmons share the Living Water with the Samburu, the provision of clean water will serve as an object lesson. Though we no longer have IM personnel on the ground in Côte d'Ivoire, working with the national church and BERACA (their NGO), we can continue the legacy of the Mileys, the Lees, and so many others who served the Lobi in Doropo. Evangelists share the message of the Great Physician as medical personnel minister to physical needs. In Cuba, missionaries have been unwelcome since the 1960s. Yet, we continue to assist Cuban Free Will Baptists to serve one another and to reach those both within and without their island nation. What a blessing the Foundation is to people in Cuba, Côte d'Ivoire, and Kenya."

Read more: fwbgo.com/news.

Snapshots Around the World

Japan—Good News Chapel in Tokyo hosted a charity concert on April 8. The event, featuring Amy McDonald's original songs that express the value God places on each individual, raised \$200 for ongoing relief work in the tsunami-stricken Tohoku area. For several attendees, it was the first time inside a Christian church.



Uruguay—Pastor Julio Figueroa and the Renacer (Rebirth) FWB Church in Melo, Uruguay, rejoiced over the salvation of Joaquin on April 2. The church also celebrated the Lord's Supper during the service.



IM Board Meets

Antioch, TN—The Board of Free Will Baptist International Missions met in its annual session April 24-25, 2017, in Antioch, Tennessee.

“It is a privilege to work with a staff and board that invites and participates in open, respectful discussions about Kingdom work,” reflected General Director Clint Morgan.

The board approved North Carolina native **Victoria Little** as a two-year, short-term intern to the Samburu. Victoria will work with Eddy and Amanda Simmons, filling the role of community health worker among a people group with little to no medical access or preventative health education. The 24-year-old graduated from Pensacola Christian College with a bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) in 2015. She is a member of Cramerton FWB Church in Cramerton, North Carolina.

The board approved **Allison**, a 31-year-old Kentuckian, for a two-year internship



VICTORIA LITTLE



ALLISON



LÁZARO AND ARIADNA RIESGO

in southern France with Shane and Joy (last names withheld) under The Hanna Project. Allison is a 2010 graduate of Welch College with a major in secondary education. Allison expects to complete her master’s in teaching English as a second language in May 2018. She plans to work with Shane and Joy, teaching English to North African immigrants.

Lázaro and Ariadna Riesgo received appointment as career missionaries. Appointed as two-year interns in April 2014, the Cuban couple arrived in the States in July 2015 to serve as missionaries specializing in leadership training for Hispanic peoples. Teaching in overseas Bible institutes and

communicating with Hispanic churches in the States, the Riesgos are based in the greater Nashville, Tennessee, area.

An unmodified approval of the audit was received from Blankenship CPA Group. The board approved a \$7 million framework budget for 2018 to be presented at the July 2017 convention of the National Association of Free Will Baptists. This number increases the budget slightly from the \$6.9 million budget approved for 2017 by 2016 NAFWB delegates. The operational budget for 2018 will be approved at the December 2017 board meeting.

All board members were in attendance.

Read more: fwbgo.com/news.

May Missionary Balances

Antioch, TN—As of May 31, 2017, six missionaries have deficit accounts and are in need of additional monthly support:

India Ministries/Carlisle Hanna . (\$67,597.74)	Jerry & Barbara Gibbs..... (\$5,105.14)
Nathan & Linda Snow(\$33,324.99)	Tyler & Kellie Penn (\$2,755.97)
Don & Ruth McDonald (\$10,019.59)	Rusty & Brenda Carney..... (\$1,405.42)

The Mission is grateful to everyone who helped remove Matt and Cristina Price and Anthony and Lea Edgmon from the deficit account list. Though not deficit, six account balances remain extremely low and in need of support:

Neil & Mandi Morgan
Kenneth & Rejane Eagleton

Dennis & Carol Teague
David & Angie Outlaw

Tim & Lydia Awtrey
Dale & Sandra Bishop

POWER

in the Word

BY HEATH HUBBARD

How do we do this? How do we engage with a culture not our own? How do we reach out to men who work 60 to 70 hours a week? How do we make connections and still prepare a sermon in Japanese for Sunday?

We were somewhat discouraged and mostly overwhelmed. We studied to be missionaries, raised support, and studied Japanese for two years. Now it was go time. We prayed for God to give us wisdom to minister and relationships to build.

A Conference

About that time, we attended a conference where God connected us with the right tools and the right challenge. We were encouraged to seek the wisdom to be intentional with the relationships we had and to always speak immediately of Christ. We were challenged to quickly invite people to study the Bible.

So, as we met people and introduced ourselves, I told people I was a pastor. They always followed up with the question, “What does a pastor do?” This allowed me to respond, “We study the Bible with people and we get to explain the Bible in detail on Sundays. Would you be interested in studying the Bible?”

I was shocked to hear them say yes. I expected “no” or “not right now,” but that’s not what I had prayed for, and I was excited to see God answering our prayers. We promptly began to study the Bible with anyone who had interest. Before too long, almost every day of the week we had someone with whom to study the Bible.

English Bible Studies

About that same time, we started an English Bible study with another missionary couple. When people asked if we taught English, we responded, “No, but we do teach the Bible in English.” Anyone who “tried out” their English with us received invitation cards to the Bible study. We always had these with us, ready to pass out.

The English Bible studies were opportunities for people to study the Bible using the disciple making movement Bible studies. This method allows people to read the story. Then, together as a group, retell the story in their own words. We follow it up with questions: “If this passage is true, what does this verse tell us about God?” and “What does it tell us about man?” My favorite question follows: “If this passage is true, how does it change your life, or what needs to change in your life?”

We were excited to see the power of God’s Word and the Holy Spirit moving in people’s hearts. They understood truths we would never have pulled out of the passage. We always had a point or two we wanted to explain or get across from the passage. Yet, frequently, more than our points or gleanings from the Word, God spoke powerful words into the hearts of the eight to ten non-believers who gathered to study the His written Word. There is power in studying the truths of the Bible. There is power in prayer. There is power as the Holy Spirit works to draw people to Himself.

Mika

We saw this displayed in the life of our friend Mika as she shared with those in our Bible study. She walked through a one-on-one study and became a Christian, growing in her relationship with Jesus. Mika showed up at our English Bible study one night. As we studied the Bible, one lady asked, “As a Christian

you have a clean heart and a clean mind? How?” Mika spoke up, “You just have to believe, and God will give you a clean heart and a clean mind.”

God had worked in Mika’s life. She had grown in her faith to the point she could explain the change she had experienced. Later, Mika told us someone with whom she worked was quite difficult. “God has changed my heart to be nice to that lady and not focus all my time on worrying about her.” We never talked to her about how to treat others. We never covered how to interact with difficult people. God and His transformational power worked in Mika’s life, not just to believe in Him but also to change her heart to show the love and grace she had experienced. Truly, it is God who works in us both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

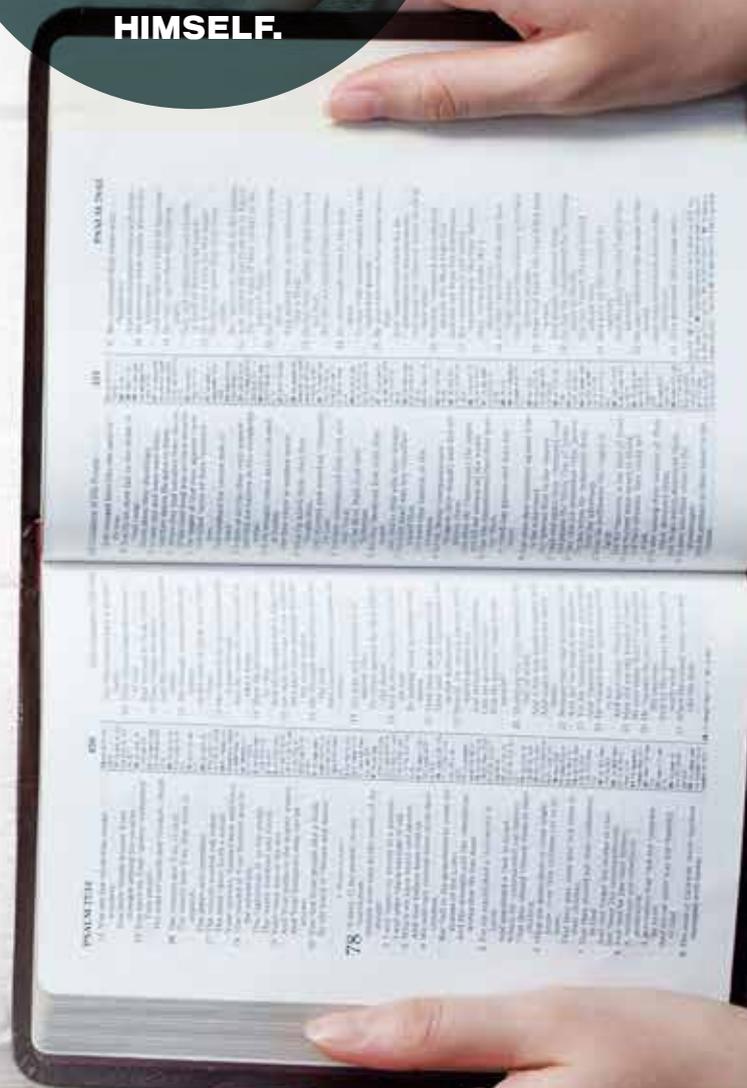
The very first time another lady came to our class, she said, “I am here because I cannot forgive someone, and I know I need help from something greater than me to forgive that person.” A year and a half later, when we left to come back to America, she shared she had finally been able to forgive that person, and she was thankful that she met us. She said she has been encouraged through our Bible study. She has not yet chosen to follow Christ completely, but she has absolutely experienced growth toward salvation. God has been good to speak through His Word as she reads her Bible daily. We trust, as she studies the Word, God will speak to her heart and draw her to Himself.

There is power in the Word of God, power in the leading of the Holy Spirit as we disciple people and love them. As we pray for opportunities to speak for Christ, we recognize “We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the power belongs to the Lord and not to us.” It is He who draws people; it is He who leads; and it is He who speaks. We get the privilege to be His vessels. As we share Christ with those around us, may we depend on His power to bring people in contact with His Word. We trust people will grow from time in His Word. We know He will teach more than we can teach. He will move people to places we never thought they could go, because He is the Almighty.

May we pray and fast and work, knowing He is able to do exceedingly abundantly more than we can ask or think according to His power that works in us.

As we disciple people toward conversion in Christ, may we be blown away by their growth, because they have learned the power of the Word of God and the power of His Spirit that leads us. **ONE**

THERE IS POWER IN STUDYING THE TRUTHS OF THE BIBLE. THERE IS POWER IN PRAYER. THERE IS POWER AS THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKS TO DRAW PEOPLE TO HIMSELF.



About the Writer: Currently on stateside assignment, Heath Hubbard, his wife Joni, and their three children (Eli, Micah, and Emma) serve in Tokyo, Japan.

From
ONE PASTOR
to **ANOTHER:**

The Test and Testimony
of a Pastoral Transition

By
Robert J. Morgan
and
Tommy Swindol



Pastoral transitions are difficult on churches, especially when the senior pastor has been at the helm for decades—and decides to remain in the congregation and serve alongside his successor. Can that work? *ONE Magazine* sat down with Robert J. Morgan and Tommy Swindol to discuss the recent leadership transition at The Donelson Fellowship, a Free Will Baptist church in Nashville.

ROBERT: Katrina and I moved to the Donelson Fellowship in 1980, and we've loved serving here. But after about 35 years, I began realizing I couldn't forever sustain the responsibilities I bore, which now included caregiving. I also had a heavy traveling schedule and writing ministry. I began praying about this every day, jotting notes and charts in my journal. Along the way, I had a few preliminary conversations with people I trusted. I asked the Lord to show me the right time to begin formalizing a transition that would allow me to focus on areas I felt were my strongest. With this in mind, we hired Tommy Swindol as our young adult pastor and as someone we could mentor for a lead pastoral position, either at TDF or somewhere else.

TOMMY: I was at Kirby Church in Michigan, but Rob had been one of my mentors since college and had approached me several times about joining his staff. I felt God was calling me to be a senior pastor one day; and when TDF called and asked me to become young adult pastor with a view toward assuming an eventual senior pastor position, I agreed. I felt I needed more training and more mentoring before assuming a lead pastor role. After moving to Nashville and taking the role of young adult pastor, I had weekly one-on-one meetings with Rob, but they didn't

involve supervision as much as mentoring. I brought questions to him, and he answered them. We had no formal plan for me to become senior pastor at TDF, just to be mentored toward an eventual senior pastor position somewhere.

ROBERT: The deacons understood all this, so we were planting the seeds of an eventual transition while leaving the options open. Primarily, we wanted Tommy to excel in young adult ministry, which he did, bringing leadership, experience, theological training, and enthusiasm. When our director of adult ministries left, Tommy assumed that role and became director of small groups. All the while, I continued to ask God to show me the best time to move toward the next phase of transition. I was starting to feel debilitated by my pressures, and I knew I couldn't go on indefinitely. Finally, after several years of praying and thinking about it, I knew the time had come. I knew it in my heart, intuitively. I approached the deacons and told them it was time to pull the trigger on a transition process.

TOMMY: Rob and I stayed close throughout this progression, as we still do. It was tough for me at times, because I knew Rob was mulling things over, praying them through, and sometimes going back and forth. Some weeks,

I thought he wanted out of his responsibilities right then; other times, he sounded as though he wanted to remain senior pastor forever. But we kept each other in the loop and supported each other. I attribute a lot of our success to Rob's confidence in the Lord, and not in himself. He's comfortable in his skin. He was transparent with me, and that set the tone for us being able to discuss things. I never wanted him to feel I was pushing him.

ROBERT: This was a long process. I tracked it in prayer for about five years before approaching the deacons and finally telling them that, under my circumstances, I didn't feel it was fair to TDF for me to continue in a role I loved but could not execute as well as I wanted. Yet, I told them, I didn't want to leave the church unless that would be best. I wasn't finished preaching and teaching, and I didn't want to retire. The deacons took this seriously and spent several months carving out a transition formula. We knew few churches with tenured pastors that had achieved successful transitions. We studied case examples, both good and bad. We read books. A subcommittee of deacons devised an organizational chart with position titles and a strategy moving Tommy to senior pastor and me to teaching pastor. I really have to give our deacons

a great deal of credit. They didn't necessarily agree with my ideas about what the transition would look like; but their ideas were more objective and better than mine, and I trusted them. They devised a plan agreeable to all. When the day came to announce this to the church, it was a little tough. But I didn't want it to interfere with my sermon, so

dated by Rob and worry about "filling his shoes." But the Holy Spirit reminded me I don't have to be Rob Morgan. He can fill his own shoes. I'm called to be me. That realization set me free. Still, I was nervous about how things would go, because we knew it had the possibility of failing. But one of the deacons said something so encouraging: "We just

ership or oppose his vision. But Tommy also treats me with respect and seeks out my opinions on things. There has not been a moment of stress between us in the 18 months since the transition, which is amazing. I'm grateful for that, more thankful than I can describe. I admit it's a little frustrating to no longer have a position invested with organizational authority. If I see something that needs to be changed, I can't issue a directive to correct it. But, on the other side of the ledger, I also don't have the same set of responsibilities. I'm able to do what I love—preaching, teaching, and writing. I enjoy telling others, "Go see Tommy about that!"

TOMMY: Rob and I divide the pulpit responsibilities, and I have responsibility for overseeing the staff and implementing the vision of the church. So far, it's working, hopefully, as the Lord intended. For pastors or staff members thinking of a transition, I advise you to make sure you don't worry about the title but about being the person you ought to be. Honor the past. Look to the future. God has been working for a long time before we got here, and He will be working long after we are gone. We need to make sure our identity is in Christ alone, not in our roles.

ROBERT: Over the years, when I was away from my pulpit, I'd feel guilty about not being at my church on Sunday. Often, I would pray, "Lord, bless them more in my absence than You would in my presence." Now, I am finding I want to pray, "Lord, bless them more under my successor than You ever did when I was senior pastor." All pastors, I think, want to leave the church as strong as we can when we've finished our term of duty. We want others to build on the foundation we tried to establish. The success of our successor is one of the crowning blessings in life.

Honor the past. Look to the future. God has been working for a long time before we got here, and He will be working long after we are gone.

I put it at the beginning of my message. I said a few words about it; our deacon chairman, Dean Jones did the same, and then I went right into my text and got into my comfort zone as a preacher, as if nothing had happened. Of course, something had happened, and everyone knew it. It took a few weeks for people to digest the changes, but, truthfully, many had seen it coming. We had question and answer sessions and did our best to explain things from every angle. At the ensuing church business meeting, not a single question was asked, and the church voted unanimously to approve the plan. It felt like the book of Acts when everyone knew the mind of the Holy Spirit and were of one heart and of one mind.

TOMMY: We had read horror stories about transitions, and it frightened me a little bit. I also thought I'd be intimi-

need to write our own story." We realized every church is unique, with its own set of circumstances, and we needed God's unique guidance. On the night of the vote, I recall how one of Rob's daughters and her family turned around at the end, and they were crying because it was the ending of a chapter. But they gave me the biggest hugs and said, "We so believe in you and in our dad." I thought it was the sweetest moment. I walked out excited to get to serve with Rob, and that I'm still close to his family and to his wife. We've had to work every day to keep things healthy, but it's been a beautiful reality, very different than the transition stories we've heard.

ROBERT: It's terribly important for my wife and family and I to support our new pastor. We back him completely, and it's a joy to work under his leadership. We would never undercut his lead-

TDF Pastoral Transition

By Dean Jones, Chairman of Leadership Council

Once Pastor Rob informed the leadership council of his desire to change roles, we looked at the process with three goals in mind: **1)** to seek the Lord's direction; **2)** to clearly communicate how a transition would take place; and **3)** to ensure that all parties involved were comfortable with each step to be taken. The challenge of transitioning from a legacy pastor of 36+ years to someone new seemed daunting, but the Lord had something else in mind.

A subcommittee was appointed from our entire council, comprised of representatives from each age demographic to ensure we had a clear picture of how the transition would affect and be perceived by all ages. I tasked the committee and the entire council to read *Next*, a book about pastoral transition, then we committed to prayer seeking the answer to three questions: Who? When? and How?

The answers to each question became clear quickly. The process unfolded faster than even Pastor Rob anticipated, but the issue of timing, calendars, and church life came into play and the timeline made sense.

We took care to talk to both Pastor Rob and Pastor Tommy,

as well as their families. We also talked with staff members who would be working with new leadership and to others in vital roles who would be impacted. Once these discussions concluded, we crafted an official statement to present from the platform. We followed this announcement with a series of Q&A sessions where interested members could get answers.

We didn't dwell on transition in our communication, but rather on a realignment of passions. Both Pastor Rob and Pastor Tommy were moving into new roles better suited for their gifts, skills, and passions. The Lord's guidance was and continues to be evident. 



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Gaining by Losing

SPRINGS



BY JEFF GOODMAN

Seven years ago, The Springs Church did not exist. It was a calling—an idea, a hope, and a giant leap of faith. Our team was petrified but excited about what God might do. Seven years later, after many struggles and challenges, God has amazed us, faithful to build His church here in Marana, Arizona.

Today, we have three Sunday morning services and are currently averaging over 300. New faces walk through the doors each week, and God continues to be on the move. Our worship is powerful, the Spirit of God fills the room, and the truth of God's Word is preached. Lives are changed, people are saved, and we are growing, but it is not enough.

I have always thought the best way to grow the Kingdom was by bringing people to your local church. Yes, that is good, but it is not enough. Simply adding to your own church is not enough. Addition is not enough. We need multiplication.

God, through his guiding Spirit, has used His Word, The Exponential Conference, Vision Arizona, like-minded pastor friends, and especially the book *Gaining by Losing* by J. D. Greear to help me to see what's really important. Many of the thoughts in this article come from reading this book.

God has called us to *multiply* His Kingdom. He has called us to take the blessings He has given us and surrender them to Him. We are to plant the seeds God has given us and give so He can bless them, grow them, and bring a harvest for His Kingdom. Planting involves risk, because when you give seed away, it's no longer yours to use and consume; it is God's to do with it as He sees fit.

I must confess, for much of our time here, I focused only on growing our church, making it bigger, and being successful. When people ask, "How's your church doing?" often they are asking how many people attend your church. But God's ways are not our ways.

In his book, J. D. Greear notes, “God does not care about our *seating* capacity, He cares about our *sending* capacity.” If we stay focused on God’s call to multiply his Kingdom, church growth would not be a problem, because Jesus will build His church.

So what does gaining by losing look like?

Well, I am new at it; we are still praying daily for God to guide us in how to best use the seeds He has given us. One of the things we are doing is partnering with a church plant directly behind us. We pray for them, hold joint services, help them financially, and plan events together. We recently partnered for the annual Trunk or Treat outreach event, and more than 4,000 people showed up. It was amazing.

At Christmas, we received a special offering and gave their church \$1,000 for outreach. Their finances are tight, and we know what that’s like. A few weeks later, after our Sunday morning services, I received a text that said, “We used your funds to promote a special service. We had 76 in attendance” (double their usual attendance). The note went on to say, “12 rededicated their lives, and two were saved.” We rejoiced with our brothers and sisters, the Kingdom was multiplied, and that is a win!

Another way we give away our seeds is by working with those in our church who may have a ministry outside the church. One is the Kairos Prison Ministry. We bake many dozens of cookies for prisoners. Every prisoner and staff member gets six cookies, and over four days, we minister to these prisoners and God does amazing things. Last year, a Muslim man gave his life to Christ. That is a win! Even though it does not impact our church directly, the Kingdom of God has grown.

Seven years ago, we had no musicians and no music, but we met a group called Worship Catalyst, and they poured into us. They did not know us; they owed us nothing, but they gave us a \$6,000 sound system and worked with us for years to develop our music. Today, we have two full bands; we even have a viola player. We need two bands for three services (especially since we are heading toward a fourth service), but we are beginning to talk with Worship Catalyst about how we can use our “spare” musicians to help other church plants. That means “giving away” our best musicians, risking that God may call them away permanently, to play at that new church plant. It is easy to nod our heads and say, “this is great,” but what about when it really hurts, when you lose some of your best resources, your most gifted musicians, or your best teachers. What do you do when God calls them to GO?

It hurts, and it hurts deeply. I have never cried so much, experienced more fear, or felt more loss than when God called my best friend and teammate Josh Bennett to plant a church in Tifton, Georgia, a joint effort between North American Ministries and the Georgia State Association. This is a loss so deep I

cannot even express it in words. We have been together for 17 years, and it has been an amazing journey. Do I miss him? Yes! I miss talking to him, planning events, going on Costco shopping trips, laughing, and celebrating wins. I truly miss all the things Josh did as he ministered here, especially his football sermon illustrations. But it will be okay, because we have eternity to talk



Photo: Pastors Josh Bennett (left) and Jeff Goodman (right)

about all God did to multiply His Kingdom. Josh is not leaving us; we are *sending* him out to plant another church that will one day plant another church.

And Josh is not the only one. Recently, we sent Cassie, our most talented keyboardist and amazing vocal singer to intern at a church revitalization project about 14 miles from our location. The pastor needs help with music; they run about 50, and cannot afford to pay much, so we plan to help cover some of her pay as well. We will truly miss her, but we *must* develop leaders willing to go.

Multiplication must be in our DNA; it is God’s mission, and it must be ours too. But this is still not enough. As a denomination, we must understand we are called to multiply God’s Kingdom. It is not just the responsibility of North American Ministries to plant churches. Churches must plant churches, and those churches must plant additional churches. At all costs, we must give away our best for the Kingdom. We must worry more about our *sending* capacity than our *seating* capacity.

It is not wrong to grow our churches, but it is wrong to hoard our resources and keep them for ourselves. We win by giving away our best.

Josh, you were our best; you are my best friend. I am so thankful to have shared this journey with you, and I am excited to see what God is going to do in Tifton, Georgia. One thing is certain. God is going to multiply His Kingdom! By the way, Josh, you better send me some boiled peanuts.

ONE

About the Writer: A Southern Illinois native, Jeff attended Welch College and pastored in Georgia for ten years before moving to Marana, Arizona, to plant a church. He and his wife Heather have one daughter, Ava. Learn more: www.FWBNAM.com

To Serve God and Country

BY KERRY STEEDLEY

DID YOU KNOW THE CHAPLAIN CORPS IS OLDER THAN OUR NATION?

The American military chaplaincy dates to July 29, 1775, when the Continental Congress authorized a chaplain for each regiment of the Continental Army. I pray for young Free Will Baptist preachers to consider the call to serve in this holy, honorable, and historic profession. Dr. David Crowe, executive director of North American Ministries, says: "Having pastored and served for 15 years in the Alabama and Tennessee National Guard, I know and appreciate the role and responsibility of chaplains." It is his vision, his passion, and his desire to increase the number of FWB chaplains.

THE QUESTION: **What is a chaplain?**

A chaplain is a pastor in uniform. He serves in one of the branches of the Armed Forces under the endorsement of North American Ministries. He is a missionary to the military, which is a great, strategic mission field. A chaplain is uniquely privileged to experience the double blessing of serving simultaneously as a soldier of the cross of Christ and as a soldier of his country.

Hundreds of thousands of men and women serve in today's all-volunteer force, and many choose to make the military a career. But for the chaplain, service in the military is a calling, not a career choice or a personal preference for a life vocation. What a pastor is to the local church and the civilian community, so is the chaplain to the base chapel and the military community. He is an ambassador of his Lord and Savior to the armed forces of the United States of America.

THE QUALIFICATIONS: **What are the requirements to become a chaplain?**

An ordained Free Will Baptist pastor in good standing with a local Free Will Baptist church must have a minimum of two years of pastoral experience to apply for the chaplaincy. The first step in the process is to apply for denominational endorsement, granted by the executive director of North American Ministries. The applicant must be under age 40 at the time of commissioning. He must have completed a bachelor's degree and the equivalent of a Master of Divinity degree. He must pass a physical exam and complete a security clearance. Topping the list of qualifications is the necessity for the applicant to confess a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and to clearly articulate his calling to serve as a military chaplain.

THE QUANDARY: To whom is a chaplain accountable?

The chaplain is on loan from the National Association of Free Will Baptists to the Department of Defense. He will always be first and foremost accountable to his endorser. A chaplain will serve in a military chain of command under the authority of an officer senior in rank to the chaplain's rank. While this may seem to be "serving two or three masters," it is not. The chaplain simply has a commander at the top of his chain of command and a supervisory chaplain in his technical chain. All three—the senior commander, the supervisory chaplain, and the chaplain—are all on the same team. A call to be a chaplain is a call to serve under the authority of the leaders appointed over him, but it is supremely a call to salute the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Commander-in-Chief. The chaplain wears a unit patch and his rank on his uniform, but more importantly, he wears the cross on his uniform as a symbol of his faith.

The chaplain does not have to compromise to serve in a multi-faith environment. This is a false perception for some. May God in His grace quicken our minds to dismiss this doubt and to quiet this qualm. In fact, one motto of the chaplaincy is *cooperation without compromise*. He does not have to "go along to get ahead and thus avoid having to get out." Rather, he is expected to remain true to his Christian faith and to the doctrine and traditions of Free Will Baptists. No government regulation, contrary to what some think, prohibits or prevents chaplains from preaching the gospel faithfully, teaching the truth of God's Word, and counseling from a biblical perspective.

THE QUEUE: Is the door open today for military ministry?

Yes, indeed! All branches of the military currently recruit and retain chaplains for active duty—the National Guard, the

U.S. Army Reserve, and the chaplain candidate program for seminary students. The Army, Air Force, and the Navy all have chaplain position vacancies. The Navy provides chaplains for the Marines and the Coast Guard.

I encourage Free Will Baptist young men to consider the call to become chaplains. Yes, you will have to stand in line. Heroes, like the first and, for a period of time, only FWB chaplain, Gerald Mangham, have stood in this line. The good news is that the line is moving. More good news is that the line begins at the offices of North American Ministries.

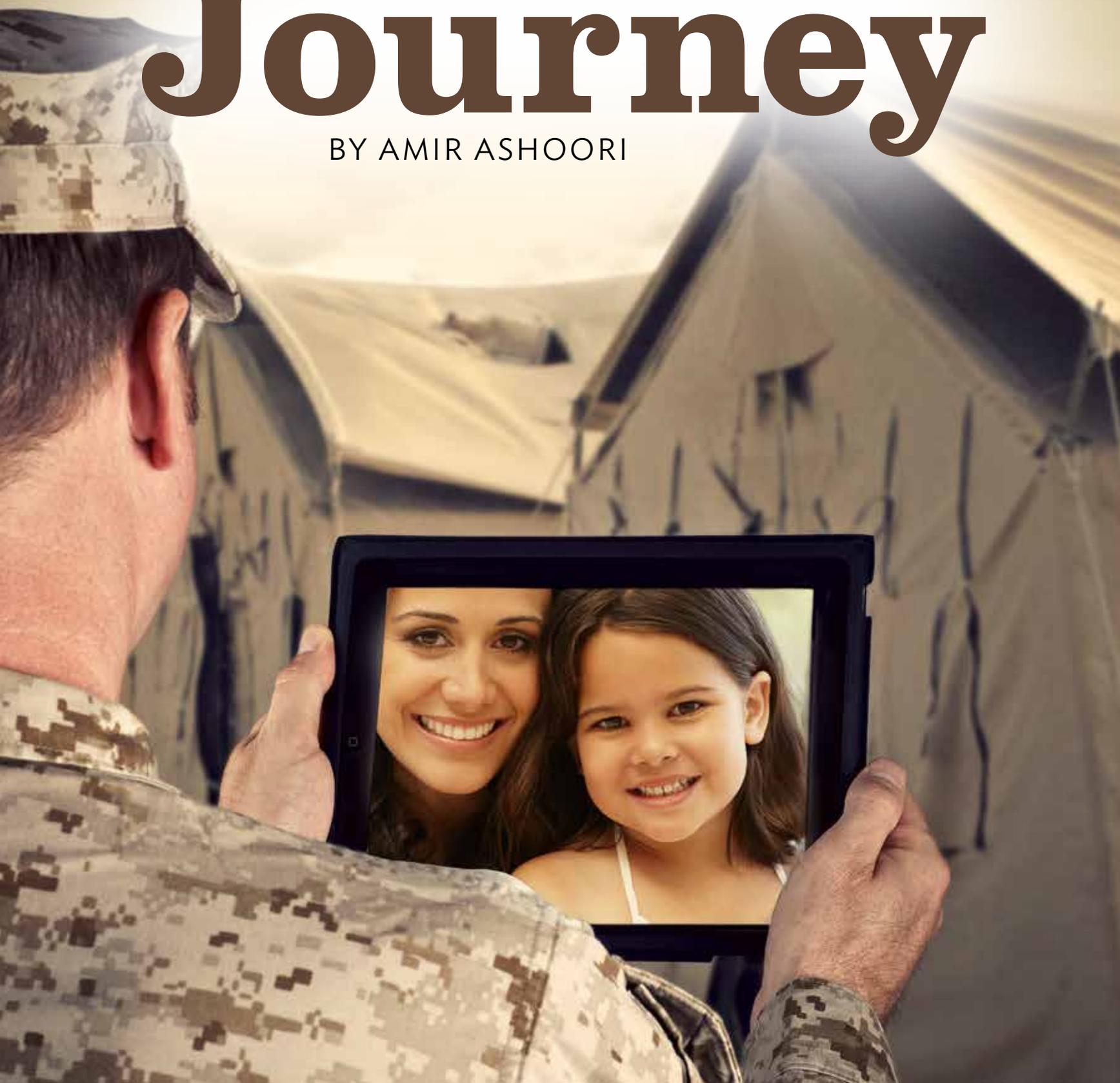
Years ago, prospective Free Will Baptist chaplains had to seek endorsement from the NAE, the National Association of Evangelicals. Then, Home Missions became our own endorsing agency. Even more good news is that the military no longer has denominational quotas. In the past, the number of chaplain slots was dependent on denominational membership, and Free Will Baptists were limited to a small number of chaplains. Today, every man who qualifies and meets the requirements has an opportunity to become a Free Will Baptist military chaplain.

Sometimes, the process of being in the queue is "hurry up and wait," but it is worth the wait. Talk to one of our current chaplains or one of our retired chaplains and hear their stories of a challenging but richly rewarding ministry. Contact North American Ministries for more information by accessing www.fwbnam.com or by calling toll free 877-767-7674.

When the national convention meets each July, as soon as the exhibit area opens, I walk up to the North American Ministries booth and ask where I can sign up again to be a military chaplain. It's a calling I have no desire to quit. If I could, I'd get in line again to be a chaplain. My prayer is for more Free Will Baptist young men called to the chaplaincy, lined up and waiting to be commissioned to serve God and country. **ONE**

Amir's Journey

BY AMIR ASHOORI



Life is a journey. As we age and move through life, we take many steps and our paths turn, change, and sometimes even double-back and cross the path we followed originally. Recently, my life's journey took a surprising turn. Even before God called me to preach, I was burdened for people who didn't know God's forgiveness. I wanted *everyone* to know the same peace and purpose I received from God when I was young.

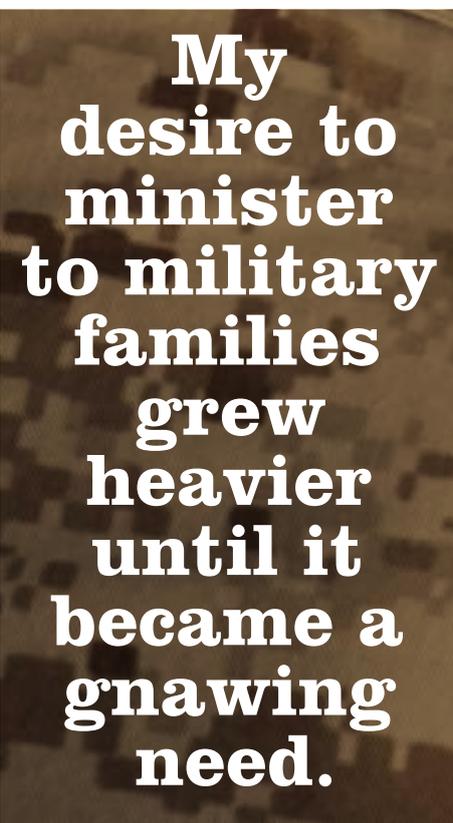
As I matured and grew in faith, I began to have a deeper respect and a special burden for military personnel and their families. I developed a habit of reaching out to individuals I encountered in my everyday life who were active military. With each hand I shook and each personal story I heard, my desire to minister to military families grew heavier until it became a gnawing need.

When I was asked to visit a hospital to be an encouragement to a young mother whose daughter was having spine surgery, I had no idea I was starting a new path in my life journey. The little girl was afraid and wanted her dad to be with her at this difficult time. Her dad was a soldier deployed in a foreign country. Linked in the hospital room via computer, he tried to comfort her. I prayed with the family and waited with the mother for the surgery to be over. I knew from talking with the father he was emotionally worn and concerned for his child.

When that soldier returned home, he came by to thank me for helping him and his family find peace at a very difficult time. A statement he made wrapped itself around my heart, and I knew I had some serious praying and

planning to do. His words were, "The Army could use more chaplains with your love and commitment."

The seed planted in my heart years earlier had taken root and was sprouting, and I began my journey to be an Army chaplain. When I began in 2012, I knew the odds of being accepted into active



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military service were slim for a man approaching the age of 40. After the extensive initial paperwork, I underwent a medical evaluation to determine my physical fitness. I failed. If I wanted to move forward with my application, I needed hernia repair surgery. A few months later, I underwent the surgery.

A short time later, I learned the master's degree I currently held did not meet Army requirements. The additional degree would take at least two years—

another roadblock on my journey. While in school, I stayed in contact with my local recruiter. During the final semester, the recruiter contacted me with yet another detour. To qualify as an Army chaplain, a candidate needed two years of preaching or pastoral experience. Initially, I wasn't concerned, because I have been an ordained Free Will Baptist minister since April 2008. But then I learned the two years of experience had to be acquired *after* the second master's degree had been earned. I was disappointed, but I did not question God.

Before long, the recruiter called me again and advised that one year of the required experience could be waived because of my previous preaching and teaching experience. I began the one-year waiting period in December 2014, and within a year, my application packet was finalized.

The next "speed bump" in my journey came when the recruiter advised me to reapply as a reservist rather than active duty, because I had no military background. His concern was that the ascension board would choose an applicant who had served in the military. I changed my application, and yet the board still denied my application during a May 2016 meeting.

Because I knew I was on a God-ordained journey, I agreed to re-submit my application when the board met the following August. On the following Wednesday, after four long years of waiting, I finally received the call for which I had waited. I was accepted as a United States Army Reserves chaplain. Who knows where this journey will take me next? **ONE**

Why
Should **MY CHURCH**

Participate in the **MISSION NORTH
AMERICA OFFERING?**

Each department of the National Association of Free Will Baptists has a time to receive a special offering to provide funds for their general fund. November is the month for North American Ministries to receive this special offering. NAM designates the Sunday before Thanksgiving as the Mission North American offering day, but funds can be sent any time throughout the year earmarked for this special offering.



Money from the general fund provides resources to **RECRUIT, ASSESS, TRAIN, and COACH CHURCH PLANTERS, CHURCH REVITALIZATION PASTORS, CROSS CULTURAL MINISTERS, and CHAPLAINS.**

WHY SHOULD MY CHURCH PARTICIPATE?

That's the question every pastor and church leader must answer. Really, there are two answers—a simple answer and one that is a little more complex. I'll give you both. The simple answer is, because your church is a part of the denomination and NAM is a department worthy to receive your support. The more complex answer is our general fund provides money for ministry-critical projects only financed through the general fund.

The *general fund* provides money to run the office in Antioch, Tennessee. It is used to pay salaries and electric bills—things no one gets too excited about funding but that are critical. More importantly, the general fund provides operational resources for each of the six main divisions of our office. Those divisions are: church planting, church revitalization, cross-cultural ministry, the chaplaincy, the Church Extension Loan Fund (CELF), and Master's Men.

Money from the general fund provides resources to recruit, assess, train, and coach church planters, church revitalization pastors, cross cultural ministers, and chaplains.

Every new church planter and revitalization pastor goes through intensive training paid for by the general fund. Ongoing training is provided through conferences, training events, and online resources. We use these funds to promote church planters, print materials such as directories (so you can stay informed and in touch), maps, brochures, and many other items.

The general fund also provides money to encourage church planters, pastors, and chaplains on the field. They are loved, prayed for, visited, trained, motivated, and from time to time given monetary tokens of our love and appreciation. Basically, everything except a church planter's salary is provided by the general fund.

The church revitalization division sponsors a number of training events and seminars free of charge to the pastors and churches of our denomination. Mostly, we travel to you to make it as convenient as possible for any church to participate in these events. Our staff is available to come to your church (without charge) to provide training, encouragement, preaching, and more.

NAM receives a portion of The Together Way plan, but those funds only provide 14% of our total general fund need. Proceeds from the Church Extension Loan Fund provide an ad-

ditional 11%, so we are dependent on gift income to make up the difference (about 75%). These are only a few of the reasons why the second answer is more complex!

SO, WHY SHOULD YOUR CHURCH PARTICIPATE IN THE MISSION NORTH AMERICA OFFERING ON NOVEMBER 19, 2017?

Because our church planters, revitalization pastors, cross-cultural ministers, chaplains, and entire team are counting on you. We cannot do what we do without your generous support. We need your prayers and financial support, so please pray about helping by participating in the offering this year. All we ask is that you promote the offering to your church. Tell them who we are and what we do and give the Lord an opportunity to deal with their hearts about giving. Then give them the opportunity by receiving a special offering November 19, 2017. Thank you for your support. **ONE**

Mission North America Offering — November 19, 2017

The Mission North America offering is the one time each year that every Free Will Baptist church and individual has the opportunity to share a monetary gift to provide funds for the North American Ministries general fund...and nothing could be *less* exciting! I mean, what fun is it to support a general fund? What does the general fund do? These are all good questions and worthy to be answered by those most impacted by it—our church planters.

“We appreciate your generous gifts to the MNA offering. As a church planter, those funds give me opportunities to grow and learn. Recently, I attended a training meeting in Phoenix funded by the MNA offering, and it was transformational and so encouraging. I enjoyed getting to learn from and share with many other church planters in our region. Church planting is lonely and getting together definitely fills my cup so I can continue the work God has called me to do.”

Jeff Goodman—Marana, Arizona

“The offerings are a blessing allowing the staff to travel to be a part of church planters’ lives for different things (for example, their launch days). It’s also nice to have boot camps/trainings so we may gain different knowledge or ideas from others to take with us to apply to our own ministry. I have just experienced my wife getting a gift from NAM, and it made her feel special. Things of that nature make us remember we are part of a larger family.”

Marshall Bonéy—Virginia Beach, Virginia

“General Fund giving makes a difference! The resources we receive as church planters through our initial and ongoing training proves to be invaluable. Occasionally, North American Ministries is able to surprise our wives/families with a special gift or token of appreciation. For instance, after an especially difficult week, my wife received a gift in the mail that brightened her day and encouraged her. That would not have been possible without General Fund giving. Thank you for your investment in NAM.”

Daryl Grimes—Erie, PA

“North American Ministries provides excellent support for us on the field. We are so appreciative of their services to enable us to build a Free Will Baptist church in such an isolated area. Though Rhode Island is not isolated from the country, we are isolated geographically from other Free Will Baptist churches and are part of a very small minority of evangelical churches in the heavily populated Northeast. North American Ministries’ vision to see Free Will Baptist churches in remote (for FWB and evangelicals) areas of the country must continue so the light of the Lord Jesus Christ can shine in dark and difficult places. We are so thankful for this mission, and we are thankful to all of you who have supported this department through the years.”

Bill Reynolds—North Kingstown, Rhode Island

These are just a few of the comments received when our team was asked about why they are thankful for the Mission North America offering. Not only does the offering impact church planters and revitalization pastors, it also impacts the denomination at every level. Here are just a few of the things we count on you to help us provide through our general fund.

RECRUITMENT ASSESSMENT TRAINING **CONFERENCES**
PRINTED MATERIALS **CHAPLAIN SUPPORT** OFFICE PERSONNEL
PAYROLL SERVICES BOARD EXPENSE **EQUIPMENT** RESOURCES **MUCH MORE**

As you can see, the Mission North America offering is vital to continue the ministry of North American Ministries. Will you earnestly pray about participating on November 19?

If your church doesn’t participate, you can give online at www.fwbnam.com.

Thank you for your continued support. ONE

Brown on Green >>

Dream Fulfilled

In 1978, Welch College offered a class called Denominational Seminar. Students learned about the structure of the denomination and about the national departments. Our final paper required us to interview one of the heads of a national department. My friend and I chose to interview Herman Hersey, director of the Board of Retirement and Insurance.

During that interview, Brother Hersey shared his dream to establish a foundation that eventually would have a significant financial impact on the denomination. Two years later, in 1980, Free Will Baptist Foundation was established. On April 17, 2017, the Foundation board voted to award \$500,000 in grants to Free Will Baptist ministries and began fulfilling Herman Hersey's dream from 39 years ago. The following grants were awarded this year:

Welch College	\$100,000	Capital campaign
International Missions	\$95,000	Cuba house churches (\$10,000)
		Cuba seminary dormitory remodel (\$15,000)
		Ivory Coast remodeling of Miley and Lee Houses (\$40,000)
		Kenya Living Waters (wells) project (\$30,000)
Randall House	\$50,000	Software capital project
North American Ministries	\$32,500	Scholarships for Hands Held High conference (\$12,500)
		Ridge Church project (\$20,000)
Cumberland Youth Camp (TN)	\$32,350	Additional housing
Camp Hope (IL)	\$28,000	Improvements to the girls' dorm and caretaker house
Randall University (OK)	\$25,000	HLC Accreditation project
Board of Retirement	\$22,650	Building for Your Future program
Executive Office	\$20,000	ReKindle program
Alabama Children's Home	\$20,000	Upgrade bathrooms
WNAC	\$18,000	<i>Shine!</i> Realizing Your Worth conference
Hilltop FWB Church (NC)	\$15,000	Southeastern FWB College TRACS accreditation
FWB Family Ministries (TN)	\$12,500	Hope Center maternity house project
Virginia State Association	\$10,000	Grace Mission technological innovative church ministry
ONE Magazine	\$7,000	Underwrite expenses for special bonus issue for pastors
Oklahoma FWB Missions	\$5,000	Church planting conference
FWB Historical Commission	\$5,000	Historical preservation equipment
Clear Springs FWB Church (OK)	\$2,000	VBS trip to Baton Rouge, LA

Thank you, Herman, for your vision and dream. ONE

About the Writer: David Brown, CPA, became director of the Free Will Baptist Foundation in 2007. Send your questions to David at david@nafwb.org. To learn how the Foundation can help you become a more effective giver, call 877-336-7575.

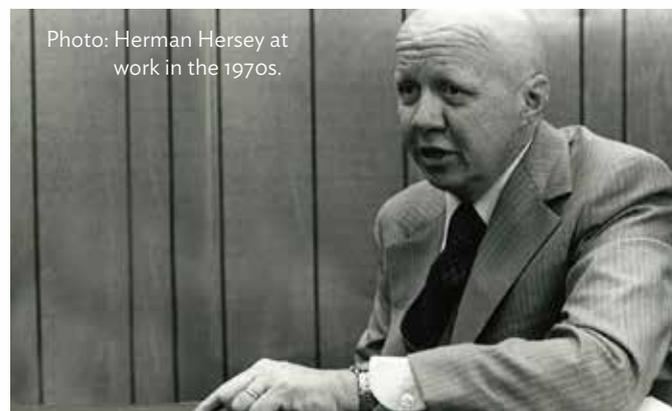


Photo: Herman Hersey at work in the 1970s.

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- D6 FAMILY:** d6family.com
- D6 CURRICULUM:** d6family.com/d6curriculum
- D6HOME:** d6home.com
- D6TEACHER:** d6teacher.com
- D6TEACHERFB:** facebook.com/groups/D6CurriculumTeachers
- D6 PODCAST:** d6family.com/podcast
- D6 BLOG:** d6family.com/blog

PREPARATION:

We recommend beginning your preparation one week in advance. Read the lesson in your Teaching Guide and the Bible study text several times, gather suggested supplies, and select which lesson options you will use (Connect, activities, etc.). Remember, the Teaching Guide is just that—a guide. As the teacher, you know your students and how to best engage them. Tap into your creativity to connect your students with the truth of Scripture.

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- God is a personal, spiritual being.
- God created the universe and everything in it.
- I am a special creation of God, with an eternal soul.
- I am engaged in a spiritual warfare.
- Sin brought death and destruction into the world.
- Bad things happen because the world is a sinful place.
- I cannot save myself. I need a Savior.
- God offers salvation and forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ.
- God established the home to make disciples and transfer the faith.
- God established the church to make disciples and transfer the faith.
- Jesus Christ is the Sovereign Lord of all.

Timeline In Each Old Testament & New Testament Unit



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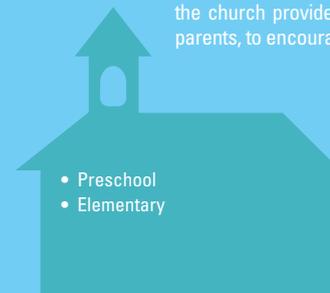
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- Week 2 - Integrity in a Corrupt World (Noah)
- Week 3 - Integrity Under Pressure (Daniel)
- Week 4 - Integrity Under Fire (Job)
- Week 5 - Integrity in Temptation (Joseph)

Nov 2017 - New Testament *(1 Corinthians) Effects of Being in Christ*

- Week 1 - Unity in Christ
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LEADERSHIP WHITEBOARD

Leadership Occurs Within RELATIONSHIPS

BY RON HUNTER JR., Ph.D.



WITHOUT FOLLOWING, THERE
WOULD BE NO LEADING.

Therefore, the title of leader does not apply when no follower has been inspired to pursue a given direction. Leadership, by its very essence, occurs within relationships. Titles, ivory towers, ties, suits, platforms, and tenure do not distinguish one as a leader. Only when people passionately follow one's ideas, example, and values is he or she a leader. One does not declare himself a leader; the evidence is in relationships.

Every person has natural God-given bents to pursue tasks or relationships. The place one gets energy or reward is either from connecting with others or checking assignments off the list. You might be a leader if you find excitement from a big challenge, but only when you can rally other people to tackle that challenge will others view you as a leader.

The image above shows a leader in a circle of workers or followers. The leader worked ahead of time with the plans, considering many of the details, but when implementing made room for others to own and improve the plans. Each follower knows he or she makes an important contribution, and the end result is a team effort. Face-to-face and shoulder-to-shoulder demonstrates a great leadership posture. The leader likewise acknowledges that significant accomplishments are not individual efforts. **Leadership only works within healthy relationships.**

LEADERSHIP QUOTE

MY OWN DEFINITION OF LEADERSHIP IS THIS: THE CAPACITY AND THE WILL TO RALLY MEN AND WOMEN TO A COMMON PURPOSE AND THE CHARACTER WHICH INSPIRES CONFIDENCE.

—FIELD MARSHALL
BERNARD MONTGOMERY

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BY BARBARA KELLERMAN

Imagine your leadership growth if you tackled the six books recommended each year.

truth & peace **LEADER**

BY BRANDON ROYSDEN

STUDENTS AND LEADERSHIP—

for some, these may seem like competing terms. Doesn't the whole idea of being a student imply submitting and learning from some authority? While it is true students often don't feel qualified or mature enough to be what many consider a leader, we actually believe it is important for students to begin to learn and practice leadership while they are young.

Youth is a gift. It provides its owner the energy, the passion, and often the free time to invest in personal development and in causes that are important. Unfortunately, we often downplay the importance of these activities for our young people. We set low expectations and encourage immaturity by warning students of the drudgery and loss of freedom adult life brings.

At **Truth & Peace Student Leadership Conference**, we believe there is no greater time to capture the imagination, motivation, and future of our homes, churches, and communities, than by investing in the development of the next generation while it is young. It's one of the reasons we developed the **Truth & Peace Leader** as a resource to help parents, youth pastors, and mentors start students down the path to present and future leadership.

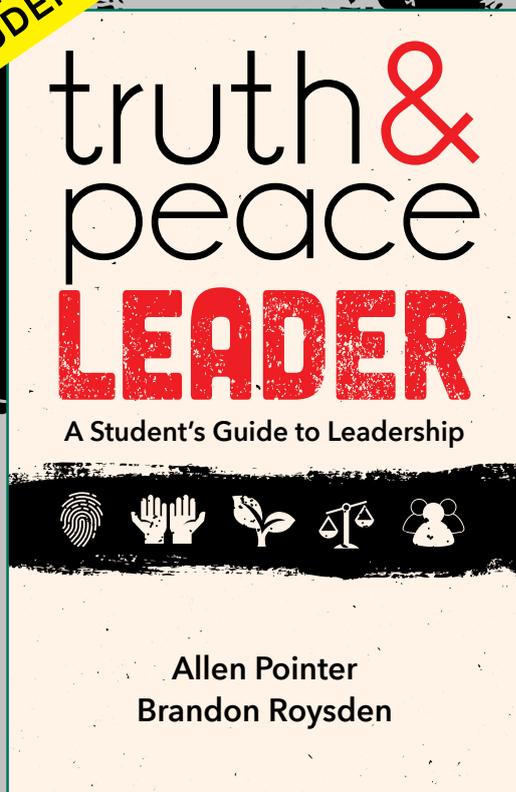
Truth & Peace Leader debunks the myth that leadership must wait until one is older. It simplifies the leadership journey into five characteristics to make it more relatable to students. It shares examples of people both past and present who decided to make a difference even in their youth.

At the end of the day, our future is riding on the ability to educate children and students in the present. God has created them for a purpose. He has a unique design for their lives, and He wants them to realize their full potential. We hope **Truth & Peace Leader** is one tool He uses to help them along the way.

ONE

About the Writer: Brandon Roysden is director of events at Randall House Publications. He and his wife Beth live in Ashland City, Tennessee, with their children Ethan and Kate. Order your copy of **Truth & Peace Leader** at RandallHouse.com.

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At Welch College >>

Fawbush Named to Sports Post

Greg Fawbush, accomplished coach, athletic director, and Free Will Baptist pastor, has been named athletic director and men's basketball coach at Welch College, according to President Matt Pinson. Fawbush fills the vacancies left by interim Men's Basketball Coach Donnie Stevanus, who resigned in March, and outgoing Athletic Director Gary Turner, who, in transition to retirement, will continue to teach in and administer the Exercise Science degree and associated academic programs.

Since graduating from Welch College in 1995, Fawbush served as a youth pastor, coach, and teacher. Most recently, he has served as director of athletic and coaching services at the 700-student-strong Seffner Christian Academy in Seffner, Florida, and as pastor of New Hope Free Will Baptist Church in Dover, Florida.

During his 21-year tenure at Seffner, Fawbush served in the athletic department and taught senior Bible. He is well known in South Florida for his successful high school basketball-coaching career, with a record of 379-135. Fawbush led his program to four state tournament appearances, including two state runner-up finishes. He has been named Coach of the Year multiple times, both in Hillsborough County and the state of Florida.

As director of coaching and athletic services, he played an instrumental role in developing Seffner Christian's athletic program as a noted force in the state of Florida. In that role, he administered 29 teams and managed 47 coaches.

"Mr. Fawbush's exceptional service at Seffner Christian Academy and ministry in the churches display his commitment to seeing God's work successfully done, a heart for serving others, and a love for the Free Will Baptist church," Pinson said. "We've watched him, from an academic standpoint, receive the highest marks from his professors in Welch's new M.A. program in theology and ministry. His record as an outstanding preacher and minister who combines Christian worldview scholarship, a 21-year athletic career, and a winning coaching record in Christian education is a great combination for our mission here at Welch." ■

Slater Named Dean of Enriched Adult Studies Role at Welch College

After 21 years as headmaster of Hendersonville Christian Academy, William Slater transitioned to a role as dean of enriched adult studies at Welch College, according to President Matt Pinson. Slater began his new post at Welch, June 1.

"We are excited to have an educational leader of Mr. Slater's caliber join our Welch team," Pinson said. "With 30 years of educational leadership in Christian K-12 education—more than 20 here in Sumner County—his record of community leadership in Sumner County, and his academic credentials, he will bring just what we need to the leadership of the newly launched Enriched Adult Studies program."

Slater holds an M.Ed. in educational leadership from the University of South Florida and a law degree (Juris Doctor) from Nashville School of Law.

The Enriched Adult Studies Program is a newly-launched program for Christian adults who desire to complete their college degree.

"Working with Dr. Charles Lea, Dr. Greg Kettelman, vice president for strategic initiatives and dean of graduate and adult education, and Sarah Bracey, adult studies liaison, Mr. Slater will give day-to-day leadership to the Enriched Adult Studies program and also serve in an advisory capacity on international students and dual enrollment relationships with private and Christian schools and the homeschool community," Pinson said.

Pinson added: "Great days are ahead for Welch as we move forward with degree programs that stretch beyond our traditional focus on residential undergraduate education. We believe many students who have received an associate's degree from Vol State, or who've attended another college and never completed their degree, will find Welch's mission attractive. Mr. Slater understands our commitment to combine our strong Christian mission with academic excellence, and his addition to our team will posture us for growth." ■

Fifty-Eight Graduates Honored During Commencement Exercises

Welch College conferred degrees on 58 students during its first commencement exercises since moving to Gallatin, Tennessee, according to President Matt Pinson. Just a few days shy of the new Celorio Hall being available on the new campus, the college was blessed to use nearby NorthField Church for a baccalaureate service on Thursday evening, May 18, followed by a commencement service Friday, May 19. Students completed degrees in multiple programs ranging from two-year associate's degrees to the new Master of Arts degree in Theology and Ministry. Forty-eight percent of the class graduated with honors.

Clint Morgan, general director of Free Will Baptist International Missions, delivered the commencement address, while Todd Parrish, pastor of First FWB Church, Washington, North Carolina, presented Thursday evening's baccalaureate sermon.

A hooding was held on Thursday afternoon, May 18, for Welch's first graduates of the M.A. program in Theology and Ministry. This event took place in the new library of Coffman Hall. A reception followed for graduates and their families.

President Matt Pinson recognized Dr. Greg Ketteman for 11 years of outstanding service as provost. Dr. Ketteman began a new position June 1, as vice president for strategic initiatives. School of Theology Dean Dr. Kevin Hester was named Academic Advisor of the Year. Dr. Ian Hawkins, chairman of the Arts and Sciences department, was recognized for ten years of faithful service to Welch College.

Immediately following the commencement service, the college family hosted a luncheon on the new campus grounds for all graduates and guests. The college commends to you and to the work of the Lord the members of the 2017 graduating class. ■

Associate of Science Degrees

Michal Tinsley Bell
Joelton, TN
Biology

Macie Brooke Cothran
Pleasant View, TN
Biology

Lydia Grace Creech
Macon, GA
Biology

Tavares Tony Dixon
Clarksville, TN
Ministry

Jessica Lindsey Hilliard
Franklin, TN
Early Childhood

Barry Lane Kelly
Bowie, TX
Ministry

Lauren Elizabeth LaMotte
Ashland City, TN
Biology

Eileen Elis Norment
Montgomery, AL
Business

Elizabeth Rose Palmer
Wellington, KS
Biology

Taylor Brooke Walker
Albany, GA
Biology

Bachelor of Science Degrees

Zachary Don Barefield
Russellville, AR
Youth and Family Ministry

Autumn Gayle Blades**
Cedar Hill, TN
History
Education – Licensure 7-12

Jordan Patrick Chandler**
Pleasant View, TN
Business Administration

Joshua Ray Colson***
Johnston City, IL
General Christian Ministry

Alexander J. Crawford
Cave Springs, AR
Youth and Family Ministry

Morgan Danae Droll**
Ina, IL
Child Development and Learning
Licensure K-6

Gregory Allen Eaton
Waynesboro, TN
General Christian Ministry

Jared Andrew Forlines**
Nashville, TN
Psychology

Adam Heath Giles
Ashland City, TN
Psychology

Abigail Lauren Greenwood*
Nashville, TN
Early Childhood
Education Licensure PreK-3

Kimberly Gail Hagood**
Whitesburg, TN
General Christian Ministry

Trevor Allen Holden*
Searcy, AR
History
Education Licensure 7-12

Ashton Paige Johnson**
Ada, Oklahoma
Exercise Science

Jason Michael Jones*
Ernul, NC
Psychology

Jamie Lee Lane
Marion, NC
General Christian Ministry

Thomas Andrew Lovett
Madison, AL
General Christian Ministry

Albert Prestin Marable, Jr.
Nashville, TN
General Christian Ministry

Steven Nicholas Marsh
Plant City, FL
Business Administration

Megan Mackenzie McNeill***
Woodlawn, TN
Early Childhood Education
Licensure PreK-3

Caleb Montgomery***
Fayette, AL
Psychology

William Carson Outlaw***
Nashville, TN
General Christian Ministry

Hannah Jane Pappas*
Turbeville, SC
Child Development and Learning
Licensure K-6

Shelby LeeAnn Payne**
Sesser, IL
Psychology

Travis A. Persinger*
Muncie, IN
Worship Music

Eric Pope
Wabash, IN
General Christian Ministry

Samuel Riggs***
Guin, AL
Exercise Science

Akelam Aswan Romain
St. Croix, Christiansted, USVI
Business Administration

Garrett Wayne Saunders
Seffner, FL
Biology

Ellen Marie Stox
Washington, NC
Psychology

Faron Wayne Thebeau**
Weslaco, TX
General Christian Ministry

Jeannine Nichole Tuttobene***
La Vergne, TN

Biology Bachelor of Arts Degrees

Billy Jonathan Champion
Dothan, AL
Pastoral Ministry

Nicholas Kyle Coleman
Greenwood, AR
Youth and Family Ministry

Daniel Thomas Dell*
Nashville, TN
Pastoral Ministry

Devon Scott Jensen
Auburndale, FL
Pastoral Ministry

Renee Elizabeth Lancaster*
Mount Juliet, TN
English

Mackenzie Brianna McNeese*
Joelton, TN
English

Daniel Michael Reeves*
Owensboro, KY
Intercultural Studies

Benjamin Thomas Scott***
Clarksville, TN
English

Lauren Janel Strickland***
Jacksonville, NC
English

Cherish "Raven" Tuttobene***
LaVergne, TN
History
English

Rebekah Joy Zuniga**
Cedar Hill, TN
History

Bachelor of Music Education Degrees

Amy Hope McDonald**
Nashville, TN
Music Education
Licensure K-12

Zurisadai Zuniga Anaya***
Springdale, AR
Music Education
Licensure K-12

Master of Arts Degrees

Michael David Hollis
Nashville, TN
Theology and Ministry

Larry Lee Reynolds
Meridian, MS
Theology and Ministry

William Elliott Reynolds, Jr.
North Kingstown, RI
Theology and Ministry

Zachary Adam Vickery
Taylor, AL
Theology and Ministry

*** Summa Cum Laude ** Magna Cum Laude * Cum Laude



Intersect >>

Follow Me as I Follow Christ

By Barry Raper

***“Train up a child in the way he should go:
and when he is old he will not depart
from it” (PROVERBS 22:6).***

Forbes magazine recently listed the most stressful jobs for 2016: event coordinator (5), police officer (4), airline pilot (3), firefighter (2), and military personnel (1). If you think about the top four, the common denominator is the safety of others. When lives are at stake, the stress level is understandably high. With that in mind, another job should have been included on this list—parenting.



Parents never “clock out.” They don’t get a paycheck. Their work often goes unnoticed and under-appreciated. If you have been a parent for any length of time, you probably realize your need for advice or help. If so, the proverb above contains a timely word just for you—a principle and a promise.

The Principle in Practice

The phrase *the way he should go* may also be translated *according to his way*. The idea is to train a child according to his or her bent, recognizing tendencies and adjusting training accordingly. Of course, you will not change the goals or principles of your parenting; you simply recognize that each child is different and must be parented differently—each according to his or her own way.

Getting children off to a good start spiritually has never been more important. The well-worn illustration is still a good one. The human heart is like wet cement. The older we get, the more it hardens and becomes set. Therefore, if you want to shape a child’s heart, to put your handprint on it, you must do it while there is time. Do it early rather than later.

The Word of God cannot be relegated to an hour on Sunday morning. God’s way must be just that—a way of life, with the Word of God woven into the fabric of all we do.

In the way he should go implies a way he should not go, the way his or her sinful heart would take him. It is the parent’s job to correct. This verse clearly calls us to be parents and not peers of our children. We live in an age when many say, “You shouldn’t suggest there is only one right way. Let children decide for themselves.”

Not only does this go against common

sense, even more frightening, it goes against the teaching and example of Scripture. Youth ministry guru Walt Mueller says media acts as a map and mirror for this generation. It is a mirror because it gives you an accurate picture of their culture, a map because it also gives them direction. It tells our kids, “This is the way.” But it is our job as Christian parents to say, “No! This is the way.”

This is what Solomon did in Proverbs 5, for example, when he urged his son to guard against the wiles of the wayward woman. While children are young, and their hearts are still malleable, it is our responsibility to communicate the way of God to them clearly, “molding” them through His teaching before it is too late.

The Promise for Parents

And when he is old, he will not depart from it. This is a general truth or promise, meaning there are exceptions. Here’s what I mean: godly parents teach their child the way of the Lord. They live a consistent Christian life before him. They take him to church. They provide a solid Christian home and environment. But when he reaches adulthood he

leaves the church and never looks back, living in complete contradiction to the way he was taught.

What happened? Consider three possibilities: 1) he was never a Christian; 2) he has strayed and will eventually return; or 3) he is a Christian but has chosen to abuse his free will. His lifestyle and behavior cannot be blamed on his parents. He may return to the

way of the Lord, or he may not.

These necessary disclaimers still do not dilute the power of the promise. This is a general truth that typically bears witness: “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

No, we cannot control the child’s will or future decisions. But we can control the training. We find a tragic statement in Judges 2:10: “When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel.”

After the death of Joshua and the Israelite leaders who followed him into the Promised Land, the next generation did not know what God had done for them. They had not been taught, and it resulted in a tragic culture where “every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”

How can we keep this from happening in our day?

By verbally instructing our children in the way of the Lord. Deuteronomy 6 tells us to share the way and teachings of God in the normal, everyday routines of life. The Word of God cannot be relegated to an hour on Sunday morning. God’s way must be just that—a way of life, with the Word of God woven into the fabric of all we do.

By providing an example of walking in the way of the Lord. A sermon, lesson, or talk about the Lord is good. But our words must correspond with our visible example. Human beings learn by imitation. We identify patterns or examples, and we adapt our behavior to match. One of the most damaging things to children is an inconsistent example. While they don’t need perfection (good thing, because we cannot provide that), they do need consistency.

In an inconsistent world, they need parents and grandparents, teachers and coaches, youth workers and camp counselors who both tell them and show them the way they should go. As the Apostle Paul once said, “Follow me, as I follow Christ.” Can you say that to your children and grandchildren about your own life? **ONE**

81st National Convention • Louisville, KY

HOME RUN IN LOUISVILLE

HITTING THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2017 CONVENTION

When the National Association met in Louisville in 2005, the post-convention report described the meeting as the “Grand Slam in Louisville.” In this year’s return to the slugger city, the convention hit another home run, with highlights that made the week one to remember:



Numbers up. In addition to great worship services and smooth business sessions, the 4,603 attendees (the highest convention attendance in five years) in Louisville enjoyed 83 well-attended seminars, workshops, and panel discussions on a wide range of topics.

After hearing a number of bleak financial reports during the Kansas City meeting a year ago, denominational departments (as a whole) shared a brighter picture in 2017. Randall House and North American Ministries, in particular, enjoyed complete financial turnarounds, both ending 2016 well in the black.

Made an impact. Fifty-five workers from ten churches and five states arrived a day early for Impact Louisville. They gathered at First Free Will Baptist Church, 15 minutes from downtown, and accomplished an amazing amount of work. In four hours, the hard-working volunteers pressure washed the brick, eaves, gutters, steeple, and sidewalks; trimmed the shrubs and refreshed the landscaping; cleaned church pews and walls in the sanctuary; removed years of accumulated storage from the attic; caulked crown molding in the fellowship hall; and prepared the interior of church for painting. After freshening up the facilities, the group helped the church host a neighborhood fun day, with inflatable games, a cookout, face painting, and more.

Celebrated 75. The atmosphere was triumphant on Tuesday night, as a stage filled with Welch College alumni led Free Will Baptists in worship as the College marked its 75th anniversary. A celebration of history and heritage, the service included a Welch College alumni choir, video tour of the new Gallatin campus, a documentary-style look at the history of Welch College, and a sermon from Welch President, Dr. Matthew Pinson.

International presence. Free Will Baptist women attending WNAC activities were thrilled to meet President Madame Solange and Counselor Madame Deborah, representing Côte d'Ivoire's own women's organization, *Femmes de la Bonne Nouvelle*, or Women of the Good News. Everyone enjoyed their impromptu a capella rendition of "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" in French (joined by Alice Smith) at Monday evening's Laughter & Latté event. When asked if they could take one thing from the States back to Africa,



Madames Deborah, left, and Solange, right, representatives from Côte d'Ivoire.



Photo: Aaron Pendergraft, worship leader.

Madame Deborah promptly responded in English, "Fast food!"

Surprising women. During the WNAC celebration service, in a move that stunned Executive Director Elizabeth Hodges, three women joined her onstage, carrying a giant check for \$19,500 from the Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Missouri Women Active for Christ. This "Tri-state Project" covered the cost of a recently purchased office car for WNAC, along with interest incurred. "My heart is overflowing with thanksgiving for the generosity of these women," said the shocked and grateful

director. "This will erase our debt for the first car owned by WNAC. To God be the glory!"

Organized chaos. These are the best words to describe the convention exhibit hall six hours before opening. When doors opened, however, visitors pushed their way into a well-organized display of ministry and discipleship resources. In addition, the exhibits were filled with free souvenirs, everything from foam "stress hammers" to door prizes including an Apple laptop computer, a Kentucky mandolin, and a number of thousand-dollar college scholarships.

Text-to-give. Thanks to the hard work of the Media Commission, for the first time, Free Will Baptists had an opportunity to give using mobile devices during the 2017 convention. Offerings from Saturday through Tuesday offset convention expenses while donations made Wednesday were split between International Missions and North American Ministries. “People don’t carry checks or cash much anymore,” noted convention manager Ryan Lewis. “The text-to-give option allowed both convention attendees and those watching at home to support Free Will Baptist ministries here and around the world.” During the week, 125 donors gave \$5,548, \$863 for the convention and \$4,685 for missions, while the total Wednesday missions offering topped \$30,000.

Checked in. For the second year, attendees also participated in Check in for a Cause. This year, the Facebook check ins helped provide funding for church revitalization efforts in Louisville. During the four-day meeting, attendees registered 1,480 check ins, with more than a million page views, and 710 new “likes” on the denominational Facebook page.

SAINTS IN TRAINING

As always, the convention centered around

the worship services. This year was no exception as attendees enjoyed outstanding music and preachers who spoke from their hearts on the theme, “Equipping the Saints,” based on Ephesians 4:11-12.

Tim Eaton, president of Randall University in Moore, Oklahoma, opened the convention with a Sunday School lesson from 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28. Rick Dement, pastor of First FWB Church, O’Fallon, Missouri, and member of the Board of Retirement, preached the morning message. He examined the characters and characteristics of discipleship, laying the foundation for the rest of the week’s messages.

Sunday evening, Marshall Bonéy, North American Missions church planter in Virginia Beach, Virginia, challenged congregants to mature ministry. He reminded listeners,



Photo: Marshall Bonéy,
Sunday evening keynote speaker



“When we do things with God, He equips and graces us.”

Monday evening, Joel Franks, pastor of First FWB Church, Glasgow, Kentucky, admonished listeners, “Do you want God to change you? Get in the Word and let it equip you for the challenges of life.”

On Tuesday evening, Matt Pinson, president of Welch College in Gallatin, Tennessee, delivered an ardent case for “Equipping the Saints Through Higher Education.” He exhorted the congregation to take the long view of daily battles by trusting “in your God who transcends your moment.”

The Wednesday evening missions service placed an exclamation point on the week of dynamic worship. A children’s choir joined the convention choir and orchestra for a rousing anthem before a parade of home and international missionaries brought the congregation to its feet.

Clint Morgan, former missionary and general director of International Missions, concluded the convention with an impassioned plea for people young and old to commit to reaching the world, whether across the street or across the globe. The altar filled as the praise team sang “Send Me Out” by Iranian Christian Gilbert Hovsepian.

Throughout the week, convention Music Coordinator Kevin Justice and the Music Commission delivered an inspiring music program featuring a convention choir with more than 100 voices, an orchestral ensemble, and a praise band.

Once again, services were streamed live, with more than 20,000 people watching at least some portion of a service during the week. This year, for the first time, the live streaming was bilingual, translated into Spanish. This milestone only seems appropriate, since Spanish translation services were first offered in Louisville in 2005.

ALL BUSINESS

On Monday, July 17, the General Board heard reports from eight national agencies and four commissions as Moderator Tim York guided board members through a four-hour, 23-minute meeting. The board approved several recommendations including a 2018 denominational budget of just over \$28

million, an Executive Committee recommendation that the 2023 convention be held July 16-19, in Raleigh, North Carolina, and a recommendation that a five-member committee be appointed to study the feasibility of forming a national department focused on church revitalization. Delegates later approved both resolutions, and Moderator Tim York appointed Stan Bunch (MO), chairman; Jeff Jones (NC); Randy Wilson (OK); Mike Trimble (MI); and Jeff Nichols (TN) to serve on the exploration committee.

Clerk Randy Bryant additionally read the names of 19 appointments to national committees: Credentials (5), Nominating (7), Resolutions (5), and Obituary Committee (2).

During well-attended Tuesday and Wednesday business sessions, delegates approved reports from the following departments:

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Executive Secretary Keith Burden celebrated a general upward trend in denominational reporting, including a solid financial picture in his own. “You’re going to hear many good things during the course of this meeting,” he noted, including a considerable rebound in The Together Way giving in 2016.

After observing that *ONE Magazine* continues to be well received, Burden announced an upcoming “bonus issue” of the magazine designed especially for pastors and their families thanks to a grant from FWB Foundation. He described the continued development of the ReKindle church health program under the leadership of Dr. Danny Dwyer.

Burden acknowledged the passing of two stalwarts of the convention this year, former convention manager Jack Williams and long-time convention registration volunteer Geneva Walker. He commended his staff and the Louisville Convention and Visitors Bureau for working through logistical changes created by the recent demolition of the Louisville convention center.

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

As he began his report, General Director Clint Morgan was enthusiastic: “A lot of people ask how IM is doing financially, and I am thrilled to say the answer is ‘better.’” Thanks to surplus in 2016, missionary deficits were

erased at the beginning of 2017, giving all missionaries a clean slate. Still, Morgan reminded listeners of the looming deadline of December 31, 2017, when missionaries whose accounts are not fully funded will be called home to begin fundraising. He urged Free Will Baptists to continue supporting missionaries financially and through prayer.

He expressed appreciation for a \$95,000 grant from FWB Foundation to fund four strategic projects: the Living Water project, Kenya; renovations to the Miley and Lee Houses in Côte d’Ivoire; renovations to the girls’ dormitories at Pinar del Río, Cuba; and underwriting the costs of church houses in Cuba.

Morgan shared five updates on progress to the 20 by 2020 plan introduced last year: 131 additional churches gave to IM in 2016, an increase of 11.8%; cash reserves reached a high point of 23.9% in 2016; a net 2.6% increase in missionaries; a 7.5% increase of international Free Will Baptists from 25,524 in 2015 to 27,612 in 2016; and a 10.4% increase in the number of international churches, from 314 in 2015 to 346 in 2017.

Recent office reorganization included a transition from regional directors to two divided positions: Curt Holland will direct field ministry personnel, and Dr. Kenneth Eagleton will direct field partnerships. Don Matchett, former director of missions for Arkansas, will join the team as director of church relations.

The mission is proposing a name change in 2018, simplifying the name from International Missions Board of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, Inc., to IM, Inc. This abbreviation will help missionaries gain entry into limited access countries, avoid raising red flags with foreign governments, and reduce the number of legal challenges the Mission encounters.

He praised God for continued blessings: a 15% increase in churches in Côte d’Ivoire since 2008; a successful deep water well for the Samburu people in Kenya; and the number of baptisms doubled in Japan in 2016. He also noted that in France, hundreds of young people have heard the gospel through the efforts of the *J’Pense* team. Morgan pointed to former mission fields now sending their own missionaries to other nations. A Cuban doctor and her family will move to Côte d’Ivoire to work in the clinic in Doropo. Free Will Baptists in India are planting new churches in Nepal, Bhutan, and other surrounding nations.

WNAC

Executive Director Elizabeth Hodges introduced two representatives from Free Will Baptist women in Côte d’Ivoire, President Madame Solange and Counselor Madame Deborah. The ladies, dubbed the “Ivorian Sisters,” thanked WNAC and Free Will Baptists



Photo: The York family, church planters to Buffalo, NY.

2017

Convention at a Glance

REGISTRATION

NAFWB attendees - 3,800

Vertical Three - 3,457

Total Attendees 4,603

Note: Many attendees register for both conventions.

SPEAKERS

Sunday School, July 16

Tim Eaton (OK)

Sunday Morning, July 16

Rick Dement (MO)

Sunday Evening, July 16

Marshall Bonéy (VA)

Monday Evening, July 17

Joel Franks (KY)

Tuesday Evening, July 18

Matt Pinson (TN)

Wednesday Evening, July 19

Clint Morgan (TN)

LIVE STREAMING

National Association

Total Visitors - 31,500

Unique Visitors - 20,200

1,480 Facebook check-ins

1.05 million views

710 new page likes

2017 BUDGETS

Executive Office - \$853,544

FWB Foundation - \$2,488,500

Home Missions - \$5,000,000

International Missions - \$7,000,000

Retirement - \$636,510

for their missions efforts, specifically WNAC efforts in sponsoring a national retreat for Ivorian women and underwriting the expenses of constructing a "feminine center" to provide health and education.

Hodges announced the Miley International Student Scholarship, which assists international students studying in the U.S. Deborah Trifinov (Bulgaria) and Keren Delgado (Panama) are this year's recipients. She also celebrated the success of *Shine!* conferences, designed for girls aged 12 to 18. Two *Shine!* conferences will be held this fall, one at Randall University (OK), October 28, and another at Seffner Christian Academy (FL), November 18.

Director Hodges shared highlights from Cuban and Uruguayan women's retreats underwritten by WAC. The retreats, which would not have been possible without assistance, provided encouragement, training, and fellowship for grateful international women.

Auditor Terry Hill sounded a cautionary note regarding WNAC's current financial situation. To respond to the financial challenges, WNAC has reduced expenses, offering their annual *Program and Plan Book* online, and reducing the number of pages in quarterly Bible studies. As Hill noted, however, "additional funding streams are needed" for the department. Hodges assured delegates she and the board would work together to address the challenges.

WELCH COLLEGE

President Matt Pinson celebrated the successful construction of and transition to a new campus in Gallatin, Tennessee, exclaiming, "This has been the craziest, most exciting, most amazing year of my 15-year presidency at Welch College." He thanked members of his faculty and staff who accepted additional responsibilities as members of the transition team.

He announced the purchase of additional property adjacent to the campus. A portion of this property will be sold to cover the expense of the purchase, a portion will be deeded to the National Association and FWB Family Ministries, and the rest will be added to the college campus, giving the College more than 90 acres of prime real estate for

expansion. He thanked former president Tom Malone for his vision in beginning the relocation process more than two decades earlier and invited delegates to attend a campus dedication service September 29.

He acknowledged construction expenses exceeded expectations due to rapidly-accelerating costs of building in the Nashville area and a number of upgrades to make facilities more comfortable and appealing. He celebrated donations doubling original estimates, and predicted \$3.75 million dollars in debt following the second phase of the capital funding campaign, which means only \$800,000 will be relocation debt. "It's about more than bricks and mortar and technology," he told listeners. "It's about training students for their role in the Kingdom of God."

Pinson celebrated record pre-enrollment for the fall 2017 semester; the successful implementation of a new graduate program, which recently completed its first cohort; new dual enrollment programs in the Gallatin area; and continued expansion of the online learning program. He predicted continued growth, anticipating enrollment approaching 500 students in the near future.

RANDALL HOUSE

After reporting a loss of more than \$450,000 for 2015, Director Ron Hunter celebrated a complete financial turnaround in 2016, ending the year with a \$224,000 surplus. He noted this was "a \$650,000 turnaround in just eight months."

The goal of Randall House, Hunter observed, is to partner with churches to help disciple church members both at church and away from church. "I think we have been doing church pretty well," he observed, "but the question is how we take that into the home."

Because Randall House only produces 12 books a year, Hunter announced the launch of a new website, FWBAuthors.com, which will feature titles from any Free Will Baptist author, no matter the publisher, as long as the books meet the criteria set forth by Randall House.

He applauded the efforts of Vertical Three, including the Vertical Three Conference (previously the National Youth Conference); the CTS Expo, with competitive activities that

continue to give young people an opportunity to develop their talents; and the D6 Conference. “These events are not about the next generation,” Hunter noted. “These events are about *every* generation.” He encouraged delegates to attend the 2017 D6 Conference, in Dallas, Texas, September 20-22, and announced international D6 conferences in Singapore, South Korea, and Malaysia in 2018, in addition to the D6 Conference in Greensboro, North Carolina.

BOARD OF RETIREMENT

Despite a transition in leadership, Director John Brummitt described 2016 as a record-setting year for the board, with 124 new enrollees in the retirement plan, an all-time high. Brummitt additionally announced a complete overhaul of the department’s website (Boardofretirement.com) that allows participants to monitor their investments online via a secure login. In addition, the website provides general financial advice, education, and tools, making it an excellent resource for every Free Will Baptist, even those not enrolled in the retirement program.

Brummitt encouraged denominational employees to establish a retirement account early, to contribute faithfully, thereby making time the “best friend” of retirement. The Board now offers a number of investment options—conservative, regular, and progressive—to give participants the opportunity to customize their accounts according to their investment strategy.

FREE WILL BAPTIST FOUNDATION

Although total assets in the Foundation increased by \$5.3 million in 2016 to more than \$68 million, Director David Brown acknowledged a slight loss in the return on endowments for the year. In addition, a number of estate-planning cancellations since 2013 created a net loss of \$328,000 (\$80,000 in 2016). In spite of these losses, Brown reported a net income of \$114,619 for the year and pointed to exciting growth in 2017, with assets increased by \$2.3 million in the first half of the year, taking the Foundation to nearly \$71 million. More than 400 people signed up for new estate plans in 2016, and

153 so far in 2017, with an estimated \$16 million going to FWB ministries in the future as a result.

Brown celebrated the successful implementation of a grant program. In 2017, the Foundation awarded a half million dollars to a wide range of FWB ministries. According to Brown, the program will continue indefinitely, barring an unexpected turn in financial markets. “We thank God for the way He has made these grants possible,” he shared, “and we humbly ask that He would continue to bless these efforts in the future.”

Brown honored Dotty Moore, who will retire August 1, for 13 years of work in the Foundation office. He posthumously honored Rick Locklear, who passed away March 28, after 12 years on the Foundation Board. “Rick was my friend,” said Brown, “and we are going to miss him.” He additionally honored Melvin Worthington and Waymon Fields for multiple terms of service on the board.

NORTH AMERICAN MINISTRIES (NAM)

Director David Crowe thanked God for 89 churches (both English-speaking and Hispanic) now affiliated with North American Ministries. He pointed to several new adventures for the department this year. Team Hawaii departed for the islands, a number of revitalization works are underway, and two new chaplains were commissioned, Hal Jones and Amir Ashoori.

After reporting significant losses in 2016, Crowe celebrated a significant financial turnaround this year, finishing \$322,927 in the black. He thanked the denomination for gifts totaling more than \$5 million in 2016. Crowe additionally thanked the denomination for their prayers after he suffered a stroke earlier this year. He commended missionaries, chaplains, and office staff for their work during his absence, noting “They know what they are doing, and they know it well.”

Board Chairman Jeff Jones recognized Bob Thebeau for his years of service on the NAM Board. Director of Chaplain Support, Kerry Steedley (COL, RET) honored recently retired chaplain John Kerry for his stellar career as a U.S. Army chaplain.

Randall House - \$4,853,750

Welch College - \$7,238,479

WNAC - \$255,000

Theological Commission - \$9,800

Historical Commission - \$4,895

Media Commission - \$5,225

Music Commission - \$4,775

Total - \$28,350,478

ELECTED IN 2017

Board of Home Missions - 2023

Bob Lewis (TN)

Josh Baer (NC)

David Sexton (VA)

Board of Retirement - 2023

Danny Baer (NC)

James Beasley (SC)

Jack Daniel (GA)

FWB Foundation

2021

Scott Coghill (NC)

2023

Bobby Edwards (TN)

Melissa Harralson (AR)

Bob Thompson (OK)

Theological Integrity - 2022

Kevin Hester (TN)

Historical Commission - 2022

Willie Martin (GA)

Music Commission - 2022

Doug Little (TN)

Media Commission - 2022

Marc Neppi (VA)

General Board - 2017

Daniel Edwards (IN)

David Inman (IA)

Josh Bush (KS)

Ashley Kidd (KY)

Bud Bivens (MX)

Jim Lawson (MI)

Wayne Hale (MID-ATL)

Larry Reynolds (MS)

Stan Bunch (MO)

Mark Shores (NM)

Executive Committee - 2017

Stan Bunch (MO)

Wayne Hale (MID-ATL)

Daniel Edwards (IN)

General Officers

Moderator - Tim York (TN)

Assistant Moderator - William Smith (GA)

Clerk - Randy Bryant (FL)

Assistant Clerk - Ernie Lewis (IL)

VERTICAL THREE SNAPSHOT

Registration: 3,457

Truth & Peace: 144 participants

Competitive Entries: 953

Serve the City: 170 volunteers, Over 2,000
hours, 23 projects

Buck-A-Week Offering: \$11,600

Youth Worker of the Year - Allen Hood (OK)

Youth of the Year - Whitney Moody (MS)

Youth Group of the Year - Ina Impact (IL)

Jim Lauthern Legacy Award - Jerrod Vickers

2018 YET TEAM

Mason McClintock (GA)

Anna Pinson (TN)

Meredith Baer (NC)

Layla England (KY)

Nate Mattingly (KY)

Krista Lindsay (AL)

Abby Myers (MI)

Kyle Wallace (TN)

Noah Ward (AR)

Collin Long (MO)

Samuel Rodriguez (FL)

Helen Shtefan (FL)

Elisa Seabolt (AR)

Download VIII photos:www.nafwb.yerbyphotography.com**General editor:** Eric Thomsen**Copy editor:** Emily Faison**Worship:** Deborah St. Lawrence**Exhibits:** Phyllis York**Vertical 3:** Mike Hollis**WNAC:** Phyllis York**Photographers:** Rodney Yerby

Sydney Walker

COMMISSIONS

Media Commission. Outgoing Chairman Travis Penn highlighted several 2017 convention accomplishments. More than 20,000 viewed convention services via live streaming. For the first time, services were available to online viewers in Spanish as well as English. The Media Commission also made it possible for attendees to give online through a text-to-give option. The commission honored Penn for nine years of service, with many milestones achieved during his tenure.

Music Commission. Chairman Doug Little indicated the commission has been “watching how quickly and dramatically worship has changed in our churches.” He admitted he doesn’t have an answer to frequent inquiries regarding the production of a new hymn book. “We don’t know if a new book is the best thing for the denomination,” he noted. The question we need to answer right now is “Where will our churches be in 10 years when it comes to worship?” He announced coming polls and questions from the commission to help it determine how to best serve the denomination.

Commission for Theological Integrity.

Matt Pinson pointed to the importance of the commission in light of an increasingly complex and confrontational culture. The commission continues to address challeng-

ing issues facing the denomination. The 2017 Theological Symposium will be hosted on the new Welch College campus, October 23-24, 2017. Pinson encouraged paper submissions.

Historical Commission. It was a year of transition as the Historical Collection moved from its long-time home at Welch College Library in Nashville, Tennessee, to the new Welch College campus in nearby Gallatin. A \$25,000 gift from the commission helped equip the new historical room with shelving and storage designed for rare volumes, with periodicals and records stored in the library’s easily accessible compact shelving. The commission continues to add to its digital archives, using equipment made possible by a grant from FWB Foundation.

As business came to a close, delegates approved two resolutions. The first offered a standing vote of thanks to the Kentucky State Association for hosting the meeting in Louisville. The second resolution extended “heartfelt thanks and a standing ovation” to President Matthew J. Pinson and the entire Welch College family that “worked tirelessly and sacrificially in seeing through the sale of the old campus and the building of the new.”

With that, the body adjourned and turned its attention to the 2018 convention, when the 82nd session of the National Association of Free Will Baptists returns to Little Rock, Arkansas, for the fifth time, July 22-25.

YOUTH CONFERENCE GETS VERTICAL**Vertical Three Conference | Louisville, KY | July 16-19, 2017**

The 2017 Vertical Three Conference (VIII) returned to Louisville, Kentucky, and hit a home run for all attendees. Over 3,400 registered participants experienced an incredible week of CTS Ministry Expo events, seminars, service opportunities, and worship services sponsored by Randall House through its Vertical Three department. Highlighting the boldness our hope in Christ brings, the VIII Conference aided attendees in exploring feelings of inferiority, strategies for sharing faith, and the work of God’s Spirit in taking the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Batting lead-off for the teen service speakers, Michael Smith, pastor of Heritage FWB

Church in Ashland, Kentucky, delivered a powerful message on the confident hope all believers possess in Christ. His message revealed how hope in Christ does not put us to shame, but shapes our lives as we serve God.

Brandon Roysden, director of the conference, followed on Sunday evening, encouraging students from around the country to find and prioritize their “why” for the goal of reaching people for Christ and giving God supreme glory. On Monday evening, Sam McVay, director of mobilization for International Missions, challenged students to be bold for the gospel, allowing its absolute truth to reorient their attitudes and actions.

Zane Black, senior high minister at Grace Church in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, hit clean-up for the teen service speakers and did not disappoint. His passionate message targeted how boldness through Christ compels believers to live out their faith in the ever-shifting culture. He motivated students to spend time in prayer and to put their faith into action by reaching out and meeting the needs of others.

The conference also gave the youngest Free Will Baptists the chance to worship through age-specific services. Katie Greenwood led 106 preschoolers in fun crafts, exciting games, and truth-filled Bible lessons each night. Johnny Miller guided 276 first to third graders in **Kids Worship**, with great music and exciting teaching featuring the theme “Off To Seek the Savior.”

Over in 456 Worship, Steve Greenwood engaged with 307 energetic kids and discussed characters from the Bible who lived a bold life for God. Pastor Steve positioned those in **456 Worship** to see how they too can live boldly for God just like Moses, Esther, and Jesus.

Kids’ Corner returned this year and was a huge hit. It provided children with an opportunity to expend a little energy during the conference and meet other FWB children. Johnny Miller and his staff managed these fun activities for children on Monday through Wednesday. Children additionally had an opportunity to sing with the first-ever all-ages choir during the Wednesday night missions service.

Under the leadership of Jane Parker, Reach That Guy re-launched this year in Louisville as **Serve the City**, with many eager participants. This service-oriented ministry provided conference attendees with an opportunity to give of their time and effort to help meet the needs of the host city. Through 23 different service opportunities, 170 conference attendees gave over 2,000 hours of service to the city of Louisville. Participants thoroughly enjoyed their service projects, particularly sorting books and organizing clothing to help meet the needs of the homeless in Louisville.

In addition, 32 pints of blood were received from attendees during the annual convention blood drive. Overall, **Serve the City** proved a wonderful opportunity for church groups to give back through service

while attending the National Association. If you are interested in participating next year, please contact Jane Parker: jane.parker.1stfreewillbaptist@gmail.com.

Attendees also gave back during the Tuesday evening Buck-A-Week offering. The year proved to be record setting, as over \$11,600 was collected to benefit Rufo and Maria Gomez, North American missionaries in Kentucky, and David and Myriam Reeves, missionaries to France. Coin banks and online giving options are available (www.verticalthree.com) for those deeply concerned about FWB Missions. The 2018 Buck-A-Week offering will help support Josh and Ashley Bennett, missionaries to Tifton, Georgia, and Anthony and Lea Edgmon, missionaries to Alpedrete, Spain.

The **GPS (Global Purpose Seekers) Experience** guided 280 participants through missionary booths to meet and interact with Free Will Baptist missionaries. This experience allows visitors to hear missionaries share God’s call to take the gospel to unreached peoples. The hope is the experience will give students a fully-orbed global missions experience, where they not only learn about God’s desire for the nations, but also see what Free Will Baptists are doing to follow Him in spreading the hope-filled message of the gospel.

ENGAGE Leadership Network seminar series continues to be a vital addition to the conference. More than 80 breakout sessions explored topics regarding the reliability of Scripture, developing and deploying student-leaders, practical ways to share the gospel, and how to appropriately engage the culture—something for all participants. Seminar speakers, including those representing International Missions, North American Ministries, Women Nationally Active for Christ (WNAC), and Welch College shared informative and practical truth during the conference. The ENGAGE Leadership Network also offered a children’s ministry and student ministry panel, discussing pressing questions, topics, and solutions for those serving in each respective ministry.

The **2017 Truth & Peace Student Leadership Conference** continued its long tradition of guiding Free Will Baptist young people to understand their unique personalities

and leadership strengths through 10 days of focused spiritual training. This training takes center-stage at *VIII* as student-leaders serve in a variety of ways, ensuring the conference runs smoothly. This year, the conference had its largest number of student-leaders ever with 144 students attending from 20 states and three foreign countries.

The conference was the first held on the new Welch College campus in Gallatin, Tennessee. With Allen Pointer and staff at the helm, Truth & Peace training culminated in an intense five days of setup, teardown, growth, and selfless service at the *VIII* Conference. This student-leadership conference is available to any FWB high-school student (grades 9-12) and applications can be found online at www.verticalthree.com

The Youth Evangelistic Team (YET) traveled over 1,900 miles, conducting eight services in four states, and working on numerous service projects. Team leaders Jeremy and Beth Thomas did an outstanding job di-



recting the program and mentoring students. Jeremy also assisted the group in leading worship for the *VIII* Conference, partnering with Mike Lewis to prepare, practice, and execute each night’s service. The 2018 YET Team will go out West for the 2018 summer tour.

If you were unable to attend the Vertical Three Conference in Louisville, please make plans now to attend the 50-year celebration of *VIII* in Little Rock, Arkansas, July 22-25. Next year, the conference will explore the theme “Unseen” from Hebrews 11:1, as Vertical Three helps students stand in a culture often hostile to their Christian faith. For updates throughout the year, visit **VerticalThree.com**.

Photo: Mark Cowart



KEITH BURDEN, CMP
Executive Secretary
National Association
of Free Will Baptists

ONE to ONE >> FOR THE GOOD OF THE TEAM

Some will find this hard to believe, but I ran track as a high school athlete. My football coach convinced me I would be a better running back if I trained and competed as a runner. Sure enough, as my physical conditioning improved my speed increased. Consequently, over time I transitioned from the half-mile run to the quarter-mile.

During my sophomore and junior years my school's track team program was just getting off the ground. Year one there were only four members. Year two there were a grand total of seven. Due in part to the recruitment efforts of our coach, and the fact that our team became progressively more competitive, there were 15 members my senior year.

Our pre-season goal was ambitious! We set out to qualify as a team for the state track meet...a feat we had never before achieved. Every member of the team accepted that challenge and went about the arduous task of training to accomplish the goal.

In the meantime, I realized my senior year signaled the end of my high school athletic career. Wanting to take advantage of every opportunity to compete, I embarked on an even more ambitious undertaking. I decided I would try to make the high school baseball team, too.

Although I had not played baseball since little league, I was convinced I could somehow manage to juggle my schedule and successfully participate in two sports whose seasons ran concurrently. I purchased some cleats, a fielder's glove and started batting practice. It was a grueling process, but I was determined to make it work.

The baseball coach, who happened to be my biology teacher, asked me to remain after class

one day for a visit. When we were alone he began by commending me for my desire to be a two-sport athlete. He admitted he would like for me to be a member of the baseball team.

He confessed, however, that the prospects of the baseball team making it to the playoffs were unlikely. He said he believed the chances of our track team making it to state were much better, and he advised me to focus all my efforts on running track rather than playing baseball. He encouraged me to do it for the good of the track team.

I followed the coach's advice. I hung up the baseball cleats and laced up the track spikes instead. Over the next several weeks I was fortunate enough to win some individual medals and our team accumulated a number of trophies. At season's end we qualified for the state track meet and managed to finish third overall in our division.

The Lord used that experience to teach me some important lessons about ministry. Stay focused. Heed Paul's admonition in Philippians 3—"this one thing I do...I press toward the mark." You need to identify, develop, and concentrate on your strengths (i.e. spiritual gifts). Don't attempt to be a sprinter if you are a long distance runner. If you set lofty goals, make sure you are willing to put in the hard work to achieve them. Perhaps it is most important to remember that it's not about you. Put the good of the team (church) ahead of your own interests. In the end you can say with the apostle, "I have finished the course...henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness...and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7-8). **ONE**



Photo: Keith Burden, top left.

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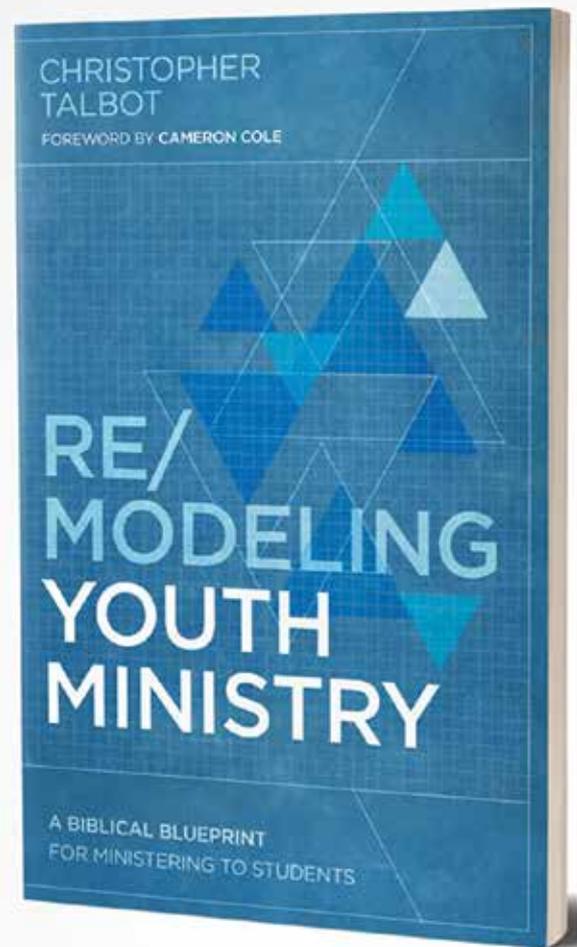
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